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## Guide to Starting a Business In 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. Please note that no guide can address regulations pertaining to every business. The business owner should contact the appropriate agency or department directly to identify the appropriate process for your particular business. Listed below are the steps to be taken to start a business in the City of Perry.

### **STEP ONE – ZONING**

The first step in the process is to make sure the proposed business location is zoned for the business in question. 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

### **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.

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

**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.

**STEP TWO – INSPECTIONS**

**Business License Inspection** – Prior to being issued a business license, an inspection at the business location must be performed by the Community Development and Fire & Emergency Services 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

**Fire & Emergency Services**

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

**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 Fire & Emergency Service departments. Cosmetic alterations, such as painting, new carpet, etc., do not require a building permit. Please contact Community Development at (478) 988-2720 and Fire & Emergency Services at (478) 988-2759 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, storm water 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.

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

### **STEP THREE**

**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.

### **STEP FOUR**

**Business License** – Upon completion and approval as required of steps 1 – 3 above and completion of the occupational tax certificate application a City of Perry occupational tax certificate/business license may be issued. There is a fee based on the number of employees. Fee schedule may be found on website [www.perry-ga.gov](http://www.perry-ga.gov) under Administration Department.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

**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.

**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

**Downtown Façade and Matching Media Grants** – 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 City of Perry Main Street Advisory Board. The façade improvements must meet the criteria established by and be approved by the Perry Main Street Advisory Board Design Committee. For more information and eligibility regarding these grants, please contact Catherine Edgemon at (478) 988-2758.

**Utilities** – The following services are provided by the City of Perry:

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Natural Gas           | Fire Protection        |
| Water                 | Storm Water Management |
| Sewer                 | Garbage collection*    |
| Grease trap servicing |                        |

These utilities can be activated by contacting the Customer Service at (478) 988-2754.

\*The City of Perry has an exclusive contract with Advanced Disposal Services to provide commercial solid waste services. Business should contact Advanced Disposal at (478) 508-5000 for delivery of dumpster(s) and billing rates.

**Contact Numbers**

Business License Office	(478) 988-2740
Community Development Department	(478) 988-2720
Customer Service	(478) 988-2754
Economic Development Department	(478) 988-2757
Fire & Emergency Services	(478) 988-2759
Police Department	(478) 988-2804
Advanced Disposal	(478) 508-5000
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 Telephone/Television/Internet	1-800-501-1776
ComSouth Communication Telephone/Television/Internet	(478) 987-0172
Perry Area Chamber of Commerce	(478) 987-1234

Visit our website [www.perry-ga.gov](http://www.perry-ga.gov) for more detailed information.