

CITY OF SAN MATEO

BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

DECEMBER 2016



 **explore San Mateo**
for your business needs

City of San Mateo Business Resource Guide

Welcome! Thank you for choosing the City of San Mateo as a location for your business. This guide has been prepared by City staff to answer common questions and help prepare your business for success.

General Business Information

Land Use Review

Before you sign a lease or contract for a business location, it is very important to contact the City of San Mateo Planning Division at (650) 522-7212 or at planning@cityofsanmateo.org to verify that your business complies with the zoning and parking requirements for that specific location.

Other than home occupations, businesses must operate only in a commercially or industrially zoned area. Some areas allow mixed residential and commercial use. However, while the Zoning Code may permit a certain use, some locations do not meet the parking requirements for that use. Many existing buildings were built prior to modern parking demands, so it is critical to understand what is allowed at your proposed business location.

Home Based Businesses

Home occupations are allowed in residential zones for offices, professional services, instruction, food preparation (with health department clearance) and handicrafts. Repair and retail sales are not permitted. The only persons allowed to conduct business activities are the permanent residents of the dwelling. Client visitation is allowed from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a maximum of five (5) client visits per day. Up to 400 square feet or 20% of the floor area of the residence can be used for business purposes and the garage may not be used at all. Outdoor storage or displays for the business are not allowed. Home based businesses are required to register for a Business Tax Certificate. See Municipal Code Section 27.16.040 (<http://qcode.us/codes/sanmateo/>) for more information on Home Occupations.

Business Tax Certificate

A Business Tax Certificate (also commonly referred to as a Business License) is required to conduct business within the City limits. All businesses, regardless of type, location or duration, require this certificate.

You will need to obtain a new business tax certificate if you are:

- Starting a new business
- Purchasing an existing business
- Opening an additional location for your current business
- Moving your business to a new location within the City of San Mateo

Your business tax is based on total annual gross receipts for the preceding year. If you have not been in business for a full year, your tax shall be based upon an estimate of your gross receipts for a 12-month period.

Business tax certificates must be renewed annually. The City Finance Department will bill you automatically for renewal of the business license in subsequent years.

The business tax certificate does not indicate clearance or approval for zoning, fire code, occupancy or any other City, County, State or Federal permit or license which may be required. It is the responsibility of the business to ensure that it is in compliance with all legal requirements.

To get more information or to download a Business Tax Application, contact the Finance Department at (650) 522-7113 or visit the website: www.cityofsanmateo.org/index.aspx?NID=304.

Non-Profit Corporations

All non-profit corporations are required to obtain a business tax certificate. The City does not charge a fee for this certificate since non-profits are tax-exempt. Non-profits must meet all other business requirements such as building and sign permits and health certifications.

Building Permits

Prior to opening your business, you must check with the Building Division to determine whether any permits are required for a change of use or alterations to the existing site. Your place of business and any equipment will be evaluated for health and safety issues including occupancy, accessibility and other requirements. Even if your building was previously occupied for the same use, code and building requirements may have changed

Here is a partial list of commercial construction activities which require permits:

- Exterior renovations
- Interior renovations/Tenant Improvements
- Installation or replacement of awnings
- Exterior signage
- Mechanical equipment and equipment enclosures
- Change in windows

Contact the Building Division at (650) 522-7172 or at Building.info@cityofsanmateo.org for assistance with your specific site.

Exterior Building Renovations

If you plan to make any changes to the exterior of your building, you may need to obtain Planning approval prior to obtaining a building permit. A planning application is typically only required for a building addition or substantial exterior changes to the building, such as structural alterations or changes to the storefront windows and doors. Additional regulations apply for historic properties.

Contact Planning Division staff to determine if a planning application will be required. You may visit the City Hall Planning Division Counter or call (650) 522-7212 or email planning@cityofsanmateo.org.

Interior Building Changes (Tenant Improvements)

Contact the Building Division staff to determine whether additional steps are needed before filing for a building permit. Building Division staff can guide you in obtaining the proper permits for your proposed project, and can identify issues such as fire sprinklers, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and other details that may impact your project. You may visit the City Hall Building Division Counter or call (650) 522- 7172 or email Building.info@cityofsanmateo.org

Fire Department Inspections

Prior to opening your business, and before you have staff on site, you must have the Fire Department complete a safety inspection of your business. The Fire Department will check equipment, occupancy, accessibility and other requirements. Even if your building was previously occupied, code requirements and safety standards may have changed. Contact the Fire Department at (650) 522-7940 for more information or to schedule the required inspection.

Work in the Public Right-of-Way

Some building improvements involve work in the public right-of-way (public property such as streets or sidewalks). Typical activities include:

- Landscaping and irrigation
- Façade improvements
- Sidewalk repairs
- Tree removals
- Storm drainage
- Sewer connections
- Plumbing improvement and/or modification

Projects in the public right-of-way require an encroachment permit from the Public Works Department. Public Works staff may be reached at (650) 522-7300.

Garbage Requirements

All businesses are required to have solid waste (garbage, recycling, compost) collection service by Recology San Mateo County, sufficient to meet the needs of the business with a minimum of once a week service. Call Recology at (650) 595-3900.

All solid waste collection containers must be stored inside the business and out of public view on non-service days, and returned to the storage location after service. The trash disposal needs of businesses vary, so rates are determined by factors including the size of your cart or dumpster, how many containers you have serviced, and the number of service days.

Signs and Other Advertising

All signs advertising businesses must receive a permit *prior* to installation. Applications are available at the Building Division counter and include questions about size, color, location, material, etc. Rules for signage vary depending on location and other factors. Banners, for

example, are temporary signs. Such signage is permitted on a limited basis. See Municipal Code Title 25 (<http://qcode.us/codes/sanmateo/>) for detailed information.

Signage plans and design may be discussed with the Planning Division at (650) 522-7212 or planning@cityofsanmateo.org. To secure a sign permit from the Building Division, come to City Hall or call (650) 522-7172 for more information.

Below are some key regulations for your business. Please consult Municipal Code Title 25 for complete signage regulations:

- Window signage is not allowed to exceed 25% of the total area of the window with a maximum coverage of 50 square feet per street frontage.
- Banners require a permit and are allowed to stay in place for a maximum of 60 days per calendar year to advertise grand openings and sales events.
- A-frame signs, pennants, inflated signs, roof signs, flashing signs and any sign erected on public property are prohibited.
- Distribution of handbills and advertisement material is not allowed unless the material is handed directly from one person to another. Posting any type of advertisement materials whatsoever on public property, including public utility poles is also prohibited and strictly enforced.

Environmental Compliance

Public Works administers waste management and water pollution control programs. Most importantly, the discharge of non-storm water discharges to the City storm drain system is prohibited. Best Management Practices are encouraged and often required to help reduce the potential for pollutants to enter the environment. For more information, call (650) 522-7300 or visit the website at: <http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/index.aspx?nid=140>.

Restaurant Requirements

There are specific requirements for operation of a restaurant business. Because of the large number of people served, and health, cleanliness and safety concerns; restaurant permitting is governed by City, County and State agencies. Both new and remodeled restaurants are monitored based on occupancy (number of diners, staff), need for restrooms, food handling and health requirements, trash, waste disposal and other factors. Below is a list of requirements for restaurant operation in the City of San Mateo:

- Restaurants are permitted in most commercially-zoned areas of the City but require Planning review prior. As part of the building permit review, a drawing of your floor plan, with dimensions of rooms/areas and exterior walls and intended uses for each room/area, must be submitted. This drawing is used to determine your parking requirement for a restaurant use and will be filed with the City.
- When spaces are converted from retail to restaurant in the City's Downtown Parking District area, applicants for planning approval may be required to pay a fee in lieu of providing required parking on the property site. Currently, the fee is \$18,000 per space, increasing on July 1, 2017 to \$25,000 per space. After 2017, the fee will increase according to the San Francisco Bay Area Consumer Price Index (CPI).

- All restaurants require permits from the San Mateo County Health Department. Visit <http://www.smchealth.org/foodforms> or call (650) 372-6200. Evidence of approval from the San Mateo County Health Department is required before the City can issue building permits or a business license.
- Food service facilities must have a pre-treatment system for grease removal designed to serve all drains that may discharge grease into the sewer, including floor drains.
- Any food store, eating place or food preparer that bakes or cooks food on the premises must apply for a waste discharge permit. You may contact Public Works at (650) 522-7300.
- Sewer service charges are determined by your use and are connected to the City sanitary sewer system. Please call Public Works Engineering at (650) 522-7300.
- If you are planning to serve alcohol, you will require a license from the State Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control. Visit www.abc.ca.gov or call (415) 356-6500.
- Seating capacity must comply with the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and Uniform Fire Code (UFC) requirements.
- Outside seating in the public right-of-way will require an encroachment permit for sidewalk tables and chairs.
- All restaurants must comply with State of California Title 24 accessibility requirements.

Restaurant Sidewalk Tables and Chairs Permits

Restaurant seating on public sidewalks is allowed where it can be accommodated without blocking the path of travel. Restaurants interested in outdoor dining must apply for a Permit for Restaurant Sidewalk Tables and Chairs from the Department of Public Works which is available online at <http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/index.aspx?nid=3307> . You may contact Public Works at (650) 522-7300 for additional details.

Outdoor Display Permits

Businesses may display outdoor merchandise if the merchandise is considered a part of the business and its goods and services. Outdoor display of merchandise is considered an accessory to an existing business which occupies a building permitted on private property in Neighborhood Commercial (C1) and Central Business (CBD) Districts. Such displays are not permitted in the public right-of-way.

Downtown Business Improvement District

Businesses located in the Downtown Business Improvement District are assessed an annual fee which funds the Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) to support purposes such as Downtown beautification, maintenance and marketing. The DSMA is a valuable resource for Downtown businesses. Contact them at (650) 342-5520 or info@dsma.org.

Downtown Parking

The City has developed a website, www.SanMateo.ParkingGuide.com, which provides comprehensive information about Downtown parking zones and facilities, weekend and holiday parking, EV charging locations and more.

Monthly parking permits for Downtown garages and lots are available for the convenience of downtown workers. Pricing varies by location of the garage and can be purchased on-line through the parking website.

San Mateo City Minimum Wage

The City of San Mateo has adopted a Minimum Wage policy which requires a minimum wage to be paid to all employees who work within the City boundaries that is above the wage required by the State. The schedule for the hourly mandated minimum wage is as follows:

Year	For-Profit Businesses	501(c)(3) Non-profits
January 1, 2017	\$12.00	\$10.50
January 1, 2018	\$13.50	\$12.00
January 1, 2019	\$15.00	\$13.50
January 1, 2020	\$15.00 + CPI	\$15.00 + CPI

For more information visit www.cityofsanmateo.org/minimumwage.

Questions?

The City's Economic Development Manager is your staff liaison to answer questions and help navigate the City's departments and regulations. We want your business to get off to a good start. Please contact the Economic Development Manager at (650) 522-7003 or at economicdevelopment@cityofsanmateo.org.

Local Business Resources

San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce

The San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce promotes business and the public interest through representation, advocacy and sponsorship. The Chamber organizes and funds programs that support the economic, civic, cultural and educational excellence of the San Mateo area.

Phone: (650) 401-2440

Website: www.sanmateochamber.org

Email: info@sanmateochamber.org

Downtown San Mateo Association

The Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) represents businesses who pay an assessment to support the Downtown Business Improvement District. As the collective voice of the Downtown business community, the DSMA works to ensure a healthy and vibrant Downtown district, promoting Downtown businesses and building awareness of this unique commercial area.

Phone: (650) 342-5520

Website: www.downtownsanmateo.org

Email: info@dsma.org

San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA)

The San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) represents a contingent of leading larger Bay Area businesses, institutions, organizations and entrepreneurs. SAMCEDA is a business advocacy organization that provides data and information that defines economic development challenges and opportunities in the region.

Phone: (650) 413-5600

Website: www.samceda.org

Email: rfoust@samceda.org

San Mateo Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The San Mateo Small Business Development Center offers a wide variety of services for existing and potential small business owners. Their services include no-charge expert counseling, low-cost training, information resources, events and seminars, and financing resources. All counseling services are confidential and free of charge.

Phone: (650) 574-6402

Website: www.sanmateosbdc.org

E-mail: shoffnerr@smccd.edu

Workforce Needs - NOVA Workforce Investment Board and Programs

NOVA Employer Services assists businesses in building relationships that enhance the employer's ability to find and retain employees. The team works proactively to deliver services that are practical, timely, and tailored to a customer's needs. NOVA provides high-quality, customized services to you whether you need staffing assistance, outplacement services or

employment training. Most of NOVA's innovative solutions are provided to you at little or no cost through a variety of grants.

Phone: (408) 730-7232

Website: www.novaworks.org

Email: info@novaworks.org

San Mateo County and State of California Resources

County of San Mateo Food/Health Permits

If your business involves selling or handling food, a permit from the County of San Mateo Health Department is required.

Phone: (650) 372-6200

Website: www.smchealth.org/foodforms

Alcohol Sales

The California Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) can provide information and permits for businesses that sell alcohol.

Phone: (415) 356-6500

Website: www.abc.ca.gov

E-mail: sfo.directo@abc.ca.gov

Fictitious Business Name

If you invent a name for your business other than your own, the name is considered a fictitious business name. All businesses should register their fictitious business name with the San Mateo County Clerk's Office before obtaining a business license from the City of San Mateo.

Phone: (650) 363-4500

Website: <http://www.smcare.org/clerk/fictitious/>

Email: recorder@smcare.org

California Business Portal

The California Business Portal website was developed by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to assist businesses with finding information and resources to assist with starting a business, relocating a business, obtaining financing, and emergency preparedness.

Phone: (877) 345-4633

Website: <http://businessportal.ca.gov/>

E-mail: support@go-biz.desk-mail.com

California Employment Development Department

The California Employment Development Department can assist in answering questions about the Job Service, Unemployment Insurance, Disability Insurance, Workforce Investment Act, and Welfare-to-Work programs for employers and employees.

Website: <http://www.edd.ca.gov/>

Sellers Permit and Use Tax Information

The State Board of Equalization issues use tax and sales tax permits and handles diesel fuel, cigarette, and hazardous waste taxes. Wholesalers and retailers that sell or lease tangible property need to contact this agency.

Phone: Customer Service Center: (800) 400-7115

Website: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/>

Business Financial Resources

CalCAP Program (State of California)

The California Capital Access Program for Small Business encourages banks and other financial institutions to make loans to small businesses that have difficulty obtaining financing. If you own a small business and need a loan for start-up, expansion, or working capital; you may receive more favorable loan terms from a lender if your loan is enrolled in the CalCAP Loan Loss Reserve Program. This program helps communities by providing financing to businesses that create jobs and improve the economy.

Phone: (916) 654-5610

Website: <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/cpcfca/calcap/>

Email: CPCFA@treasurer.ca.gov

Opportunity Fund

The Opportunity Fund is the largest Micro-Loan Fund in California that provides small loans (average size \$18,000) to small and startup companies.

Website: www.opportunityfund.org

E-mail: info@opportunityfund.org

San Mateo Small Business Development Center (Small Business Administration)

Assists in securing financing for businesses through the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the form of real estate loans, guaranteed loans, loans for women-based businesses and other products.

Phone: (650) 574-6402

Website: www.sanmateosbdc.org

E-mail: shoffnerr@smccd.edu

KIVA

Kiva crowdfunds loans for borrowers in more than 80 countries. In the US, KIVA crowdfunds loans for borrowers who are either financially excluded or create social impact in their communities.

Phone: (828) 479-5482

Website: www.kiva.org