



CONVENIENCE STORE STARTER GUIDE

A guide to opening your Convenience Store in Nova Scotia

Let us navigate you toward success! For personalized assistance contact a [Business Navigator](#) at 1-844-628-7347



CREATE YOUR BUSINESS

- **Create a business plan** that includes items such as: Market research, your organizational structure, a description of your store, include the goods you wish to sell including tobacco and lottery, a floor plan, revenue forecast and budgetary requirements.

There are various government agencies and other organizations that offer free help for planning, and start-up financial assistance (at various interest rates). Call a Business Navigator to find out more at 1-844-628-7347.

- **Request and secure a Business Name through the Registry of Joint Stocks** at [RJSC Connect](#) or contact 1-800-225-8227.
- **Register your Business** within 90 days to ensure your business name is secured and to receive your unique Business Number.

Types of Businesses include sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations. Legal advice is recommended for preparation of incorporated documents.

- **Activate your Business Number** with CRA at 1-800-959-5525. Activation is mandatory if you have employees, you import or export, and/or your gross revenue exceeds \$30,000.
- **Workers Compensation Insurance** may be mandatory for your staff or, an option you may want to consider. Contact WCB at 1-800-870-3331 or www.wcb.ns.ca to discuss your specific requirements. **Research any additional insurance** requirements such as liability and disability.



CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION

- **Next contact your municipality or town** to confirm your preferred location is zoned for your store type and discuss signage requirements. For Halifax, contact 311. Now that you have chosen a location, you must create a site plan.



CREATE YOUR SITE PLAN

Submitting your plan drawings before construction starts will minimize the risk of costly changes. **Create a diagram or layout** of all rooms, showing their sizes and use, include food storage areas, and fire safety plan.

Source of water - if a well water supply is to be used, show the location of the well on your plan; and provide a water test and register with Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Sewage - if an on-site sewage disposal system is to be used, show the location of the system; and provide documentation it was assessed as suitable for intended use by an engineer

Waste storage - show location of waste storage area (dumpster, shed, etc.), grease interceptors, composters and recyclables.

Parking - show parking areas and driveways.

Access - ensure you have Barrier Free entrances & washrooms

Allow your Public Health Officer to review your layout before starting to build or renovate.

Make sure you contact your municipality to ensure your plans follow building and renovation codes. For Halifax, contact 311.

Your plan needs to be approved by multiple inspectors for different requirements – an approval from one does not approve another.



APPLY FOR PERMITS

Begin the permit process 3-6 months before opening.

Start by contacting a Business Navigator at 1-844-628-7347 to determine which permits and licenses you require and to connect with your inspectors.

For a **Food Establishment Permit** contact Business Navigation or your regional [Department of Environment and Climate Change Office](#). A pre-opening inspection will be required.

If you are serving food, the owner and/or at least one person per work shift must be Food Hygiene certified. Recognized courses are available from a variety of private companies online. **For a full list of approved courses contact Business Navigation or visit the [website](#).** **Proof of certification is required upon inspection.**

For construction permits, zoning, signage and **occupancy permit**, contact your municipality or town. For Halifax, contact 311.

For a Tobacco License contact Business Navigators for the application form or, Service Nova Scotia at 1-800-565-2336, Inspection will be required.

For a Lottery License contact Atlantic Lottery at 1-800-561-3942.

To sell beverages in Nova Scotia, you must register to remit beverage deposits. Contact **Divert NS** at 1-877-313-7732 .

If you intend to **use** Natural Gas, Propane, Furnaces, Elevators or Broilers contact Technical Safety for requirements at 1-800-9LABOUR.

To operate a propane exchange, you must hire a **properly licensed supplier** to install and maintain your propane appliances.



BE READY FOR FOOD INSPECTION

Protect Food from Contamination - Store food 15 cm/6 inches off the floor. Check for Best Before dates on prepackaged products on a monthly basis.

Keep Cold Food Cold - below 4 °C/40 °F. Keep frozen below -18 °C/0 °F

Keep Hot Food Hot (If applicable) - above 60 °C/140 °F. Reheat all hazardous food to a minimum internal temperature of 74 °C/165 °F.

Maintain Food Contact Surfaces - Keep all food contact surfaces clean and in good condition.

Maintain Non-Food Contact Surfaces - Keep surfaces clean, sanitary and in good repair. All surfaces must be smooth, non-absorbent and easy to clean. Ensure proper operation and maintenance of equipment.

Keep Washrooms Clean and Properly Equipped - Keep washrooms clean at all times.

Store and Remove Waste Correctly - Remove waste on a daily basis, or more often if necessary. Your outdoor garbage area should be maintained in such a way that pests are not attracted to it.

Keep Pests Under Control - Cover outside openings to prevent pests from entering and eliminate food or water sources. Consider obtaining a contract with a licensed pest control operator.



PREPARE FOR EXCELLENCE

Please ensure any changes to your site plan, menu or layout are communicated to your assigned Public Health Officer before you build or renovate.

Post all required signs and permits as outlined by inspectors.

Mark your calendar. Schedule equipment maintenance and set reminders to renew your permits and licenses.

Be ready for inspections. Some happen quarterly, twice a year and once a year. You will not be notified of your inspection date.

For payroll and tax assistance contact CRA at 1-800-959-5525.

For road access (new/upgrades to roads and driveways) **and highway signage** for your business contact Transportation and Active Transit at 1-844-696-7737.

In most municipalities **grease interceptors** are required for your business. In Halifax, contact Halifax Regional Water Commission at 902-420-9287 for more information.

For Occupational Health and Safety requirements such as **WHMIS Training, First Aid and Workplace Health and Safety** contact OHS at 1-800-952-2687. Access the Small Business Safety Toolkit at www.Workplace-Safety-Toolkit.ca .

For Employer/Employee obligations and rights including minimum wage, hours of work, terminations, vacation/holiday pay (etc.), contact the **Nova Scotia Labour Standards Division** at 1-888-315-0110.

Contact **Nova Scotia Power** regarding electricity connection at 1-800-428-6230.

Stores are required to hire private companies for **garbage and recycling collection**. Contact your municipality or town to determine who in your area is an authorized collector.