

Business Startup Checklist

1) Business Structure & Registration

- Choose a business structure and register the business (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation).
 - Draft shareholders' agreement, if applicable.
 - Open a business bank account, if required.
 - Apply for a business loan, if required.
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2) Licences & Permits

- File [EHT](#) return if payroll exceeds the exemption threshold.
 - Use [BizPal](#) to identify and obtain required permits and licenses for your business.
 - Confirm local licensing requirements with your municipality.
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3) Taxes & Accounting

- Ensure you have a **CRA Business Number** and register for applicable CRA program accounts (e.g., GST/HST, import/export) linked to your BN. **Find out** if you need to register for GST/HST, and register **here**.
- Corporations are to file the T2 corporate tax return within 6 months of the fiscal year end.
- Remit GST/HST and payroll deductions on required monthly/quarterly schedules.
- Open a Business Account with CRA
- Payroll Registration: Register with [CRA](#); remit CPP, EI, and tax deductions.
- Prepare and file T4/T4A slips if you pay employees or certain contractors.
- Register for HST (if annual revenues exceed \$30,000 or voluntarily).

4) Insurance & Risk Management

- Obtain business insurance (general commercial, professional, cyber, etc.).
- Assess industry-specific risk coverage needs.

The Information is for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide specific financial, investment, tax, legal, accounting or other advice to you, and should not be acted or relied upon in that regard without seeking the advice of a professional. Your advisor can help to ensure that your own circumstances have been properly considered and any action is taken on the latest available information.

5) Operations Setup

- Draft contracts, terms of service, and privacy policies.
- Set up technology (website, email, business software).
- Arrange utilities, equipment, and supplies.
- [Register for WSIB](#) if required.
- Create and review mandatory policies regarding [Health & Safety](#), [Violence & Harassment](#), AODA compliance.
- Posters: Post required workplace notices in a conspicuous location, including the OHSA "Prevention Starts Here" poster, and the WSIB "In Case of Injury" poster.

7) Employment & HR

- Draft employment or independent contractor agreements.
- Prepare workplace policies (health & safety, harassment, privacy).
- Comply with Ontario Employment Standards Act (ESA) requirements.
- Register for WSIB (if applicable).
- Follow [Ontario Employment Standards Act](#) requirements.

6) Branding & Marketing

- Develop a logo and brand identity.
- Build and launch your business website.
- Create marketing materials (brochures, business cards, digital ads).
- Set up social media profiles and marketing campaigns.

8) Compliance & Ongoing Obligations

- Maintain accurate corporate records and minute books (if incorporated).
- File annual returns with the Ontario Business Registry or Corporations Canada.
- [Renew your business name](#) every 5 years if operating under a trade name.
- Keep licences and permits up to date.
- Review our [Business Compliance Checklist](#).

 **Need Help?** Contact [Insight Law Firm](#) for personalized compliance guidance tailored to your business needs.

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