

# Cleaning Business Guide



## Set Up Your Business

**Create a plan** that determines what type or range of cleaning services you will provide.

[businessportal.sfgov.org/start/create-a-plan](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/create-a-plan)

**Choose a business structure.** LLCs, Corporations, and Limited Partnerships must register their structure with CA Secretary of State before registering locally.

[businessportal.sfgov.org/start/choose-a-structure](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/choose-a-structure)

**Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN)**, also known as a Federal Tax ID Number from the IRS. This is used to identify your business and allows you to hire employees. If you are a sole proprietor without employees, you may choose to use your Social Security Number instead.

**Register your business** with the City through the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTX) and the Office of the Assessor-Recorder.

[businessportal.sfgov.org/start/register-your-business](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/register-your-business)

**NOTE** You may choose to obtain a separate business address, or you may use your personal address for your registration. Whichever you choose, it must be a physical address, not a P.O. Box.

**Choose and file a business name.** File a Fictitious Business Name (FBN) Statement at the SF Office of the County Clerk if you will be using a name other than your given name, the names of your partners, or the officially registered name of your LLC or corporation. Research the name's availability in your county before filing.

[businessportal.sfgov.org/start/choose-a-name](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/choose-a-name)

**If you plan to hire employees**, be sure to follow all wage and employment guidelines.

[businessportal.sfgov.org/start/hire-employees](https://businessportal.sfgov.org/start/hire-employees)



## Cleaning Services

**Adopt workplace safety measures** that comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements for the cleaning industry. These include providing a workplace free of hazards, training employees to do their jobs safely, notifying government administrators about serious workplace accidents, and keeping detailed safety records.

[osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov)

**Dispose of hazardous materials properly.** You can dispose of up to 220 pounds or 27 gallons of hazardous waste using the City's drop-off program at SF Recycling and Disposal Inc. Call (415) 330-1425 for an appointment.

**Consider obtaining insurance to cover accidents.** In a cleaning business, you will be performing various types of physical activity and operating in other people's offices or homes. As a result, it is more likely for injuries and property damage to occur.

[insurance.ca.gov](https://www.insurance.ca.gov)

**NOTE** The SF Department of the Environment offers a green cleaning pilot program that certifies local cleaning business as Green Businesses. To learn more, call (415) 355 3700.



## After Opening

**Solicit work.** There are a number of ways to seek out work, including using the web, word-of-mouth, advertising, partnerships, etc.

**NOTE** Ask for references from existing customers. Word-of-mouth can be the most effective way to gain new customers.

**Negotiate compensation & payment plan** prior to signing a contract. Consider taking a class or seeking other advice on contracts.

**Prepare and pay your local, state, and federal taxes.** Learn more from these departments:

[sftreasurer.org](https://sftreasurer.org)

[sfassessor.org](https://sfassessor.org)

[ftb.ca.gov](https://ftb.ca.gov)

[irs.gov](https://irs.gov)



To speak with a business counselor  
visit the Office of Small Business

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(415) 554-6134