

As well as the general regulations that all enterprises must comply with, many businesses — from childminders and sandwich-bar owners to taxi drivers — are affected by specific regulations and sometimes need special licences

Is your business in a specialised sector?

Food businesses

If you run a business which makes, handles or sells food, you must comply with hygiene rules to make sure it is safe to eat

Food businesses have to meet a range of requirements relating to the design of their premises, the way staff handle food and the temperature at which food is kept.

Catering businesses — from restaurants, cafes and burger vans to businesses run from home — must register their premises with their local authority at least 28 days before they start trading. Some other types of food business must be approved or licensed before they begin trading (butchers' shops, for example).

Businesses selling packaged food to consumers or to other food businesses must include certain information on the packaging.

There is a range of product-specific regulations you may have to comply with. These generally affect manufacturers of animal-based products such as dairies. Contact your local authority's environmental health service for guidance.

Next steps

- *The Food Standards Agency produces Starting Up: Your First Steps To Running A Catering Business, a special pack for new businesses containing an information booklet and*

CD-ROM. Contact 0845 606 0667

- *Your local authority's environmental health service can advise on specific food-related issues — contact it early on if you're considering setting up a food business. A list of local authority websites can be found at www.ukonline.gov.uk*
- *For more information read: Guide To Food Hygiene; Food Law Guide. Contact Food Standards Agency: 0845 606 0667; www.food.gov.uk*

Entertainment and leisure

Businesses which sell alcohol or provide entertainment or leisure services to the public often need a licence

Public houses, restaurants, nightclubs, hotels, shops, betting shops or other gaming establishments selling alcohol must get a licence from their local magistrates' court.

Cinemas, theatres, indoor sports venues, night clubs and any type of establishment hosting public entertainment events have to apply to their local authority for a licence. Fees vary.

A new licensing system is due to be phased in from summer 2004. Businesses will apply to their local authority for a single premises licence covering all the licensable activities they wish to carry out.

Next steps

- *For details of your local magistrates' court, contact the Court Service: 020 7210 2266; www.courtservice.gov.uk*
- *Links to all local authority websites can be found at www.ukonline.gov.uk*
- *Get more information on changes to licensing laws from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport website. Contact www.culture.gov.uk/alcohol_and_entertainment*

Health and care services

Childminders, care homes and other businesses which look after people have to register with the relevant body

Childminders and child day-care nurseries must register with the Office for Standards in Education, as must boarding schools, further education colleges and residential special schools.

Care homes, children's homes, independent healthcare establishments, residential family centres, home-care agencies, fostering agencies, nursing agencies and voluntary adoption agencies must register with the National Care Standards Commission.

Massage services and businesses that pierce the skin (such as tattooing, cosmetic piercing and acupuncture) must

Check for changes in the law

Regulations, figures and sums of money may have changed since publication. Update check: 0845 600 9 006
www.businesslink.gov.uk/figures

generally get a licence from their local authority's environmental health department.

Next steps

- For childcare and education, contact the Office for Standards in Education: 0845 601 4771; www.ofsted.gov.uk/childcare
- Providers of care homes and independent medical care should contact the National Care Standards Commission: 0191 233 3556; www.carestandards.org.uk
- Local authorities license massage and acupuncture businesses etc. A list of local authority websites is available at www.ukonline.gov.uk

Transport businesses

Businesses which transport goods or people normally need a licence

Businesses which transport goods need an operator's licence if they use a motor vehicle weighing more than 3.5 tonnes when fully loaded or more than 1.525 tonnes unladen. This applies even if you have hired the vehicle or you're transporting goods for just one day.

There are different types of licence depending on where you are transporting the goods and for whom you are carrying them.

For safety reasons strict rules

... and many other special cases

Many other businesses require licences or registration and must conform to regulations governing their operations. Check with Business Link

These pages give an outline of some of the special requirements applying to broad sectors to help you consider whether your planned business might be affected.

But there are many other activities that are regulated — from manufacturing, boarding kennels and street trading to money lending and handling asbestos.

Next steps

- Check whether your business is affected by special regulations. Contact Business Link: 0845 600 9 006; www.businesslink.gov.uk
- Your local authority's environmental health or trading standards officers can advise on licences
- For credit licences (for many activities, from lending money to hire services) check with the Office of Fair Trading: 08457 224499; www.offt.gov.uk

also cover the transport of a range of hazardous materials which could be poisonous, flammable, explosive or corrosive.

Businesses which transport people normally have to obtain a licence, too. If you run a taxi or private hire vehicle (minicab) which carries fewer than nine passengers, you must get a licence from your local authority.

If you offer a service carrying passengers using a vehicle with more than eight passenger seats, you will normally need a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator's licence from your local Traffic Area Office, part of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) (see **Next steps** below).

Strict rules also apply to both goods and passenger-carrying vehicles on maintenance, the number of hours drivers may work and how these hours are recorded, and the type of driving licence they must hold.

VOSA can advise on operating commercial vehicles.

Next steps

- The Traffic Area Network has further information on the rules which apply to goods and passenger-carrying vehicles, and can give you details of your local Traffic Area Office. Contact 0870 6060 440; www.vosa.gov.uk
- Get more information on driving licences from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. Contact 0870 240 0010; www.dvla.gov.uk