

For every hit, if a website is given, open it. Also search the business details in Bing and Google (or alternate like Baidu) to try to find open signals and closed signals (operating status, not business hours).

Your status choices are Open, Out of Business (Closed), Temporarily Out of Business (Temporarily Closed), and Cannot Verify.

The two most common scenarios are 1) you found a reliable, matching, active resource and no sign of closure = Open, OR 2) you found evidence the business existed before and there is a sign of permanent closure = Closed. (You won't always find evidence of past existence, see [note](#).)

Open Scenario / # 1 Example: Open, in this case by chain store page and no closed signal. Search Name and Full Address on both Bing and Google to view web search results, note there are current user reviews and there is no review page/aggregator with permanently or temporarily closed flag. *Search the store locator** and find this matching location. Matching addresses are usually within 100 meters. If the distance is greater than 100 meters, a user would likely not be able to see the sign or find the business they intend to visit from this location, and so it is not considered a match.

Example: Macy's Backstage, 2055 NE Allie Ave, Hillsboro, OR 97124
© Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open
Source URL: <https://stores.macysbackstage.com/or/hillsboro/hillsboro.html>

**Why search the store locator, when you can find a matching, dedicated store page URL in web search?*
That's because sometimes there are leftover pages, which are URLs the business has failed to take down even after the location has been closed. Or the information you want might be on another page (like [here](#) the 'East Side Library' is 'permanently closed' but the [dedicated page](#) says nothing about it).

Out of Business Scenario / # 2 Example: Closed, in this case by not being found in the chain store locator and there's a permanently closed flag. Search the store locator – no stores in Dallas. Name and Full Address search turns up closed signals (reviewed/flagged permanently closed in [Google](#), matching social with past activity and permanently closed flag [OFB](#)*, various articles discussing the closure).

Example: Belk, 13550 Dallas Pkwy, Dallas, TX 75240
© Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed
Source URL: <https://www.belk.com/stores/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/BelkDallasGalleria/>

**OFB: Official Facebook.* Must have a matching name and address or service area and have posts from the business, and to consider them Open those posts must be within 365 days. If you see no posts at all or the phrase 'Posts about <business>', that's a Community Page and you cannot use it as an OFB.

Watch for signs of Temporary Closure (definition: they're not operational right now and it seems likely they will be open in the future; if the reopen is set within 30 days, just say Open instead). Like below, you might get indications of a permanent closure. Use your best judgment but certainly do not mark these locations as open. [CWS](#) says 'Opening Fall 2022' and the pinned post of the [OSS](#) says 'We plan to be open this fall'. The reviewed [Google](#) entity has a 'Temporarily closed' flag (this flag and the permanently closed flag are both red so do not get them confused). You can ignore [Yelp](#)'s closure flag in this case.

Example: Salt & Vine, 3308 Olney Sandy Spring Rd, Olney, MD 20832 <https://www.saltandvine.com/>
☉ Verified Temporarily Out of Business – There is evidence that the business is currently closed, but will reopen in the future

Source URL: <http://www.saltandvine.com/> ; <https://g.page/saltandvinemd?share>

If a business, due to Covid-19, is temporarily closed at the physical location or has changed to appointment only, but they still have business operations continuing in some form (like apartment leasing offices offering virtual tours or restaurants allowing food pick-up and delivery where normally you could dine inside), please mark these as Open and not Temporarily Out of Business – we do not want to harm active businesses. However, if a business has ceased all operations temporarily due to Covid-19, do mark Verified Temporarily Out of Business.

Social media pages must have input from the business within 365 days (and no closed signal found in web search) to use them as Open signals. The Official Social Site (OSS) is usually Facebook but may also be Dianping, Ctrip, Practo if claimed, Ekiten, Hotpepper, Gnavi, Tabelog, VK, or OK).

Example: The Boulevard Salon, 1387 Mcfarland Blvd E, Tuscaloosa AL 35404

☉ Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open

Source URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Boulevard-Salon-379620535029/>

To mark a business as Open by user reviews (and no closed signal found), those reviews must be newer than 60 days/2 months (ignore star only ratings). Please pardon us if this example goes out of date.

Example: Don Diego's Restaurant & Lounge, 801 W Historic Highway 66, Gallup, NM 87301

☉ Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open

Source URL: <https://goo.gl/maps/sHxWp8NQYucRMfPj9>

You might find a Singleton (a business with only one location) that is Open by its CWS (Company Website) or OSS, with no closed signal. In this example, we know this is the CWS because it has a matching name and address, and the website is dedicated to this business – it's not just a mention.

Example: Cadets Player Development Academy, 182 Old Route 9, Ste 3 Fishkill, NY 12524

☉ Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open

Source URL: <https://cadetsbaseballacademy.com/>

Do not use the Bing entity alone as an open/closed signal for this project. We really want status choices to reflect inputs from the business itself (either directly as a CWS or through active posts on the OSS, or indirectly in the form of business licenses, professional memberships, third party services like restaurant bookings, news articles, etc) or from users who are engaging directly with the business.

Consider the umbrella business versus the contained business in the same enterprise. These pairs can be a school in a school district, an ATM of a bank, a city or other government body for a department they operate (like a city's fire department), among other relationships. If you can't easily find a reliable resource for the contained business, try looking for the umbrella/parent business and navigate their website or do a site: search to find better information. In the below hit, you can search the state

website, 'All Agencies' for the phrase 'State Patrol' or you can do a site search (put this in your search engine search field *site:nebraska.gov 1600 NE-2*). This is their old location so we need to close it.

Example: Nebraska State Patrol, 1600 Highway 2, Lincoln, NE 68502

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: https://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/informer-2020_quarter_4.pdf

Mall websites that list their stores can help too, even though the mall and the stores are different enterprises. If all stores are listed and the given store is not found, you can close the store. Note that here we have a [leftover page](#) that isn't reflected in the current [store list](#). [Yelp](#) confirms the closure too (as does the [chain store locator](#) not having this store). So we close this one.

Example: Orange Julius, 896 Southcenter Mall Tukwila, WA 98188

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://www.westfield.com/southcenter/stores>

Contained professionals (medical, insurance, etc) can often be confirmed using CWS lookups like this agent lookup <https://www.wellsfargo.com/locator/wellsfargoadvisors/>. Be mindful if you're judging the office "Wells Fargo Advisors" (CWS) or the professional "Timothy Jordan".

Example: Wells Fargo Advisors – Timothy Jordan, 297 N Hubbards Ln, Louisville, KY 40207

☉ Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open

Source URL: <https://home.wellsfargoadvisors.com/timothy.d.jordan>

If you're searching for a doctor, dentist, insurance agent, etc, and the first thing you see when you do a web search for Name and Address is a bunch of aggregator hits and no CWS suggestion, there's a good chance you're dealing with a business listing we need to close. For example, the below doctor probably retired. The CWS is now a parked domain (<http://steignereye.com/>) – it belonged to him in 2013. His Ophthalmology license is "Inactive" since 2018 ([search](#)). Nobody is reviewing any of these listings (like on [Yelp](#)). And in street images you see the business sign in 2013 ([GSV](#)) and later the sign is removed*. Please close this.

Example: J. Bruce Steigner M.D., 712 Belanger St, Houma, LA 70360

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://goo.gl/maps/E5reVpiyYhhQBoLc9> ; <https://goo.gl/maps/P2W7rLWuYKkvXJbi8>

Replacement by an unrelated business at the same distinct address tells you the business closed. In this example, you can see the business present and later gone in *street images** (GSV [2016](#) [2019](#)) and you can also see them being reviewed recently at a [new address](#) which suggests they relocated.

Example: Alterations Plus, 1113 Corsbie St SE, Decatur AL 35601

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://www.sproutschilchildrensconsignment.com/>

**Looking at street images gives you so much useful information quickly. ([Bing Streetside](#), [Google Street View](#) (GSV), and/or [Baidu Panorama](#) are your best bets.) You can get details about zoning*

(private/residential, commercial, warehouse/industrial, mixed usage) – so if you had a big box retail store with a residential address, you could close it as being a junk listing. You can see how many locations occupy the given address (like in the above example where one business replaced another, though if the given address is to a large office building, it might not be that helpful to you). You can see changes over time, including sign replacements and buildings being built/demolished (so [check dates](#)).

Vary your search terms. Try combinations of Name and Address (full, city only, etc) or Name and Phone. Name alone or “Name” alone (in quotes, which means ‘this is required’) can give different results; it’s especially helpful where the business moved or has very little web presence. Try adding key words like ‘Facebook’ or ‘Closed’ to boost those search results. In this example, searching Name and Full Address turns up only aggregator matches, but searching “*High Five Cultivation*” leads us to the business registry with matching name and address and ‘Dissolved’ Status so we know this can be closed.

Example: High Five Cultivation LLC, 2300 E Gore Blvd, Lawton, OK, 73501

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://www.sos.ok.gov/corp/corpinformation.aspx?id=3512708433>

Read user comments. Consider them alongside the rest of your web search results. In this example, there is no CWS, no social page, and the address is residential ([GSV](#)) though this could have been a home-based business, which would explain why it’s gotten picked up by aggregators ([CMAC](#)). On Yelp 5/24/2017 the user says “I couldn't even find this place, I don't think they exist anymore.” We agree.

Example: Glamorous Nails By Gail, 325 Clay St, Ottawa, IL, 61350

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://www.yelp.com/biz/glamorous-nails-by-gail-ottawa>

Allow matching between a full address line (street level portion) and a city/state alone, when you are dealing with a Service Area Business (SAB) but not otherwise.

SAB Example: Restoration 1 of San Antonio Northside, 600 El Portal Dr, San Antonio, TX 78232

☉ Verified Open – The official website, social site, or reviews confirm it is open

Source URL: SAB <https://www.restoration1.com/san-antonio-north/>

Non-SAB Example: Georgia Power, 752 Main St Ste A, Forest Park, GA 30297 <https://www.georgiapower.com/>

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://goo.gl/maps/qVK2Crs9wJEFuctm9> ; <https://goo.gl/maps/JJ1337cW1XhLvdNQ8>
(do not say Open using this <https://goo.gl/maps/F9ZcCvShF3jBbYKfA>)

Watch out for registered office addresses given on Imprint/Impressum pages, because in the [UK](#) and Germany/France/Italy/etc, the registered office is not necessarily the actual physical location of the business. Please prefer the details given in the landing page header/footer and contact pages as well as in any location searches/lists (if the addresses differ on those pages), and read the names carefully as these pages may also give details for related businesses (who does their accounting, taxes, webpage, etc).

For example, you'd mark the Norfolk location as Open and the Birmingham location as Out of Business (<https://www.bernardmatthews.com/contact-us/>).

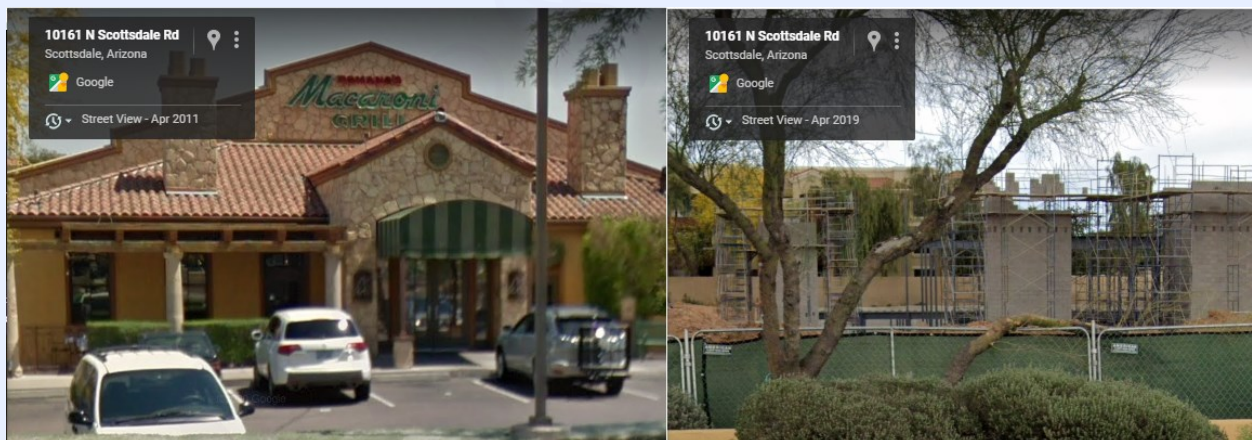
Sometimes, you will find very little information in web search about a given business, and it won't be immediately clear 1) if you are dealing with a legitimate business that has no web presence or only very old web presence (Possibly/Probably Open), OR 2) if it never existed, or it no longer exists and all evidence of past existence has been removed from active websites (Possibly/Probably Closed).

Please apply the search skills illustrated in this document (at minimum: look for a CWS, look for a social page, look for user reviews, check street images) and consider the benefit or harm of your status judgment. If you are confident the business could not exist now at the given address, close it.

Just do your best and we'll give support as needed; feel free to 'Report a technical issue' for reason 'Need clear instructions' if you get stuck on one and tell us what you see and which part is confusing.

Also, for any examples in the above document that have gone out of date/churned, we'd love it if you followed this same feedback pathway to let us know (just once will do, and please clearly identify which example it is) so we can update it.

Google Street View is an excellent resource for determining business closures. The date can be changed where it says "Street View – [Month] [Year]", and so it can be used to prove that a business previously existed at a location. In the screenshot below, you can see on the left in April 2011, the Macaroni Grill existed at the provided address. But the building was torn down years later, and future images show a new business at the location. This is evidence that the business has closed.



Example: Romano's Macaroni Grill, 10161 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ, 85258

☉ Verified Out of Business – There is clear evidence the business is closed

Source URL: <https://goo.gl/maps/bMJ2yfswaEwmKjPp9>