



STARTUP CHECKLIST

As you launch your business, remember to always consult official sources (like .gov sites). You'll begin receiving spam mail, phone calls, emails, and texts after incorporating--always ask an expert if you're unsure whether the communication is legitimate.

CHOOSE A NAME & ENTITY TYPE

Confirm that your name is available with the Secretary of State (<https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov>), and that an appropriate domain name is available for your website, social handles, and email (<https://www.godaddy.com> or similar).

INCORPORATE YOUR BUSINESS

After you've chosen your entity type (LLC, corporation, not-for-profit corporation, for example), visit the Secretary of State website to incorporate (<https://ecorp.sos.ga.gov>). If you are a not-for-profit, don't forget the IRS required language in the "optional provisions"

APPLY FOR EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN)

Visit the IRS website AFTER you have received your email confirmation from the Secretary of State (<https://www.irs.gov>). Be sure to download and save the pdf of your EIN letter, and take a photo or make note of your EIN before you leave that page.

FILE YOUR BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP INFORMATION REPORT (BOI)

For-profit business owners must register within 30 days of incorporation in most cases (<https://boiefiling.fincen.gov>). Previously incorporated businesses have no more than one year to file.

GET A BUSINESS LICENSE (OCCUPATIONAL TAX CERTIFICATE)

Visit the city or county office where your business is based to apply for a business license. Be sure that your type of business is allowed in the location you have chosen! Check zoning ordinances to confirm, or contact your local zoning office.

ANY OTHER LICENSES OR PERMITS?

If you are starting a business in a regulated industry (like food, real estate, law, medicine, therapy, or imports, to name a few!), be sure you apply for all of the permits and licenses required for your industry. Nonprofits will also have to apply for IRS designation to be tax exempt.



GET INSURANCE

Commercial liability insurance and other types of insurance specific to your business type can be quoted through an insurance broker or, sometimes, through your home or car insurance provider.

SET UP A BUSINESS BANK ACCOUNT

Keep business and personal income and expenses separate! Set up a bank account for your business. One account is enough for most startups, depending on the amount you plan to keep in the account.

SET UP ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Whether you choose an accounting software like Quickbooks or a DIY system like Excel, you should have a system from the beginning to track all of your income, expenses, assets, and liabilities.

SECURE YOUR DOMAIN, SOCIAL ACCOUNTS, AND BUSINESS EMAIL

Purchase the domain (or domains) that you will use for your business. Only set up social accounts that you will keep up with--and they should be the ones where your customers spend their time. You can buy a web domain through a DIY builder if you choose.

DECIDE ON BRANDING AND LOGO

Branding is your identity and voice as you interact with customers. It should appeal to your ideal customers and be consistent in look and feel. What colors and fonts will you use? What is your logo? You can do this yourself or pay a service or expert.

PREPARE FOR SALES AND EMPLOYMENT TAXES

If you are planning to sell products, you will need to get set up with the Georgia Department of Revenue to collect and remit sales tax. If you are planning to hire employees, you will need to be set up with the Georgia Department of Revenue (<https://dor.georgia.gov>) and Georgia Department of Labor (<https://dol.georgia.gov>).

