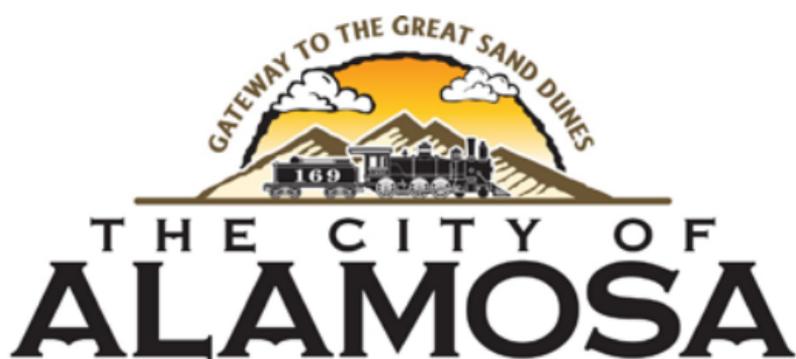




New Business Guide



Starting a Business in the city of Alamosa? Great!

The City of Alamosa welcomes you to our business community. Starting a business is exciting and challenging. We want you to succeed! Although there are many things you will need to consider when starting a business, the focus of this brochure is on City requirements. Whether you are expanding an existing business, creating a new one in an existing retail space, or building from the ground up, City staff will be working with you every step of the way. While each situation is unique, we have tried to answer some of the most common questions regarding requirements for starting a business, other related permits and licenses, and different agency responsibilities. We have provided a listing of people and agencies who you may want to connect with on the back. While it is the business owner's responsibility to research applicable regulations and obtain any necessary licenses or permits, staff is here to help.

If you need further assistance, please contact us at 719-589-2593 ext. 9.



FAQS

Where can I open my business?

Two factors determine where you can open a business: the kind of business (use) and the zone where it will be located.

Who is required to have a sales tax license?

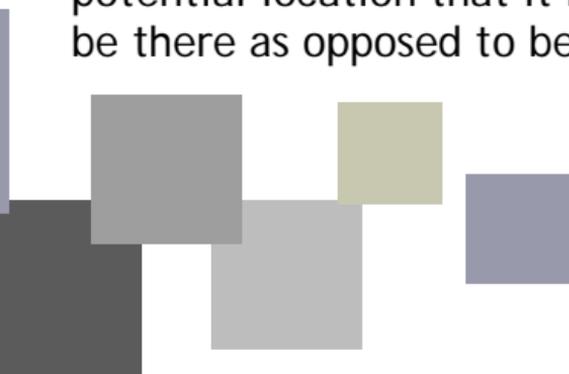
Sales tax licenses are needed for any business operating within the city of Alamosa which conducts retail sales. Licenses must be renewed annually through the Finance Office.

How do I open a compliant business?

City Planning and Building staff will help you determine what requirements are needed. Most City requirements are set out in **Uniform Development Code** and the **International Building Code**. New construction typically requires more up-front work than does moving into an existing building, however with the changes in regulations through the years, existing buildings may have **non-conformities** that may need to be addressed in order to lawfully operate.

What is a non-conformity?

A **non-conformity** is something that was lawfully established under a previous use code but does not meet the current code. It is sometimes referred to as being 'grandfathered in'. There are many kinds of non-conformities, such as the use, building, signs, parking, etc. Certain kinds of redevelopment may trigger updating a property to other aspects of the code. Never assume that because a certain type of business was previously allowed in your potential location that it is currently allowed to be there as opposed to being grandfathered in.



How do I know that my building is safe to be occupied for the intended use?

Set up a meeting with the Building Official for a walkthrough inspection. If the building is changing occupancy class, you may have to perform work on the building to meet safety requirements.

When do I need a building permit?

You will likely need a **building permit** for all work except for painting, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and other finish work.

When do I get a Certificate of Occupancy?

You will get a **certificate of occupancy** if you have changed occupancy class and meet the building safety requirements or if you have pulled a building permit and performed all work to building code standards.

What kind of signs can I install?

Signage is governed by the **Uniform Development Code**. Most sign installations require you to submit a sign permit application with City Land Use. These permits are free.

Can I serve alcohol?

New liquor licenses may be granted by City Council. If you are moving or expanding your business and already have a liquor license, your license will have to be amended.

What funding is available from the City to assist with my business?

In most cases, the City does not finance private businesses; however the City does have a façade grant for businesses in certain locations. Other local incentives are available on a case by case review and are subject to approval of the City Council.



GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

Building Permit - A permit authorizing construction or work on a building issued by the City of Alamosa Building Department

Certificate of Occupancy - A document stating the structure is safe, habitable, and approved for the intended use

International Building Code - A model code the City adopted for construction and structures

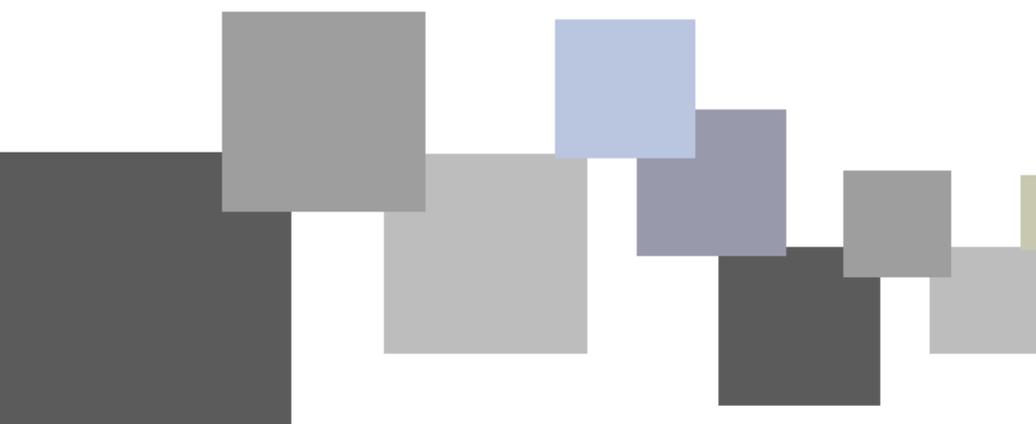
Non-conformity - An aspect or use of a property that was previously established but does not meet the City's current land use code

Occupancy Class - The classification of a structure based on the use for the purposes of building and fire code enforcement

Uniform Development Code (UDC) - Chapter 21 of the Alamosa Code of Ordinances that governs land use, zoning, and development

Use - The classification of the use of a property according to the UDC. Not to be confused with occupancy class

Zone - The designation of land by the City for the purposes of development where specific uses are permitted



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