

Frequently Asked Questions

City of Berkeley Online Business License Portal

1. What is the portal?

The City of Berkeley Online Business License Portal allows the majority of businesses to renew their license online.

When business renew online, they will have access to copies of their business license and receipt and can view past license information for previous years.

Beginning in 2024, Rental of Real Property businesses can apply for a license online – if the business started in the current calendar year.

2. Who can use the portal?

Businesses who meet the following criteria:

a. Coded as one of the following:

| Business Type | Tax Code |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Administrative Headquarters | Q |
| Business Personal Repair | B |
| Cannabis (Medical and Adult Use) | CC |
| Entertainment | E |
| Grocer | G |
| Manufacturing | M |
| Motor Vehicle Sales | V |
| Non-Profit | N |
| Professional-Semi-Professional | P |
| Rental of Real Property | L |
| Retail | R |
| Wholesale | W |

b. Must be current with their taxes meaning no gap years or outstanding balances.

c. Know their business license number and the last four of the Social Security Number (SSN) or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) reported on their business license application.

d. Have a valid email address

3. Can I apply for a business license online?

Yes, beginning in 2024, Rental of Real Property businesses can apply for a license online – if the business started in the current calendar year.

If you are applying for a non-current year or non-Rental of Real Property business license, please review our business license application guide here:

<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/guide-to-applying-for-a-berkeley-business-license.pdf>

Please fill out a business license application which can be found at:

bit.ly/businesslicenseapplication. For more information regarding new licenses, please visit: bit.ly/NewLicenseInfo

Mail your completed application, including a check made payable to City of Berkeley for the applicable fees to:

Finance Department
Revenue Collection
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704

If you prefer to complete the application in person, you are welcome to visit the Customer Service Center located at 1947 Center Street, 1st Floor. The hours of operation are Monday to Thursday, 8:30AM to 2:00PM.

We are working to expand the application portal.

4. I visited the online portal site, but I don't know what to do.

Please review this [user guide](#).

5. Will I still get a physical license in the mail if I renew online?

Yes. Please expect to receive it within 10-15 business days.

6. Will I still get my vehicle tags, if I requested them?

Yes, you will receive them with your physical license. Please expect to receive them

within 10-15 days.

7. I renewed my license online, but I entered the wrong gross receipts. How do I fix it?

The City does not accept amendments online. However, the City will accept amended business license renewal forms if payment for that license has been made within the year.

You may submit an amended tax renewal form and additional payment. Please complete a current-year license renewal form and recalculate the tax due:

- [General Business License Renewal Form](#)
- [Non Profit Renewal Form](#)
- [Rental Property License Renewal Form](#)

On the form, write “AMENDED” at the top of the page and include payment for the new amount.

Checks should be made payable to City of Berkeley.

Please send all documents to:

Finance Department
Revenue Collection
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704

8. When I renew my license, a “Contact Information” window pops up immediately, but I’m not able to edit most of the fields. Why not?

At this time, you can only make changes to the business owner’s contact and mailing information but not the business owner’s name. This will not impact your ability to pay for or renew your license.

To update the business owner’s information, complete and return the [Business License Change Request Form](#) to the City by:

- E-mail: BusLic@berkeleyca.gov
- Mail: Finance Department
Revenue Collection
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor Berkeley, CA 94704
- In-person: 1947 Center Street, 1st Floor Berkeley, CA 94704

1947 Center Street, 1st Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704 | Tel: (510) 981-7205 TDD: (510) 981-6903 Fax: (510) 981-7280
E-mail: onlinebusinesslicense@berkeleyca.gov | Website: www.berkeleyca.gov/finance

Open Monday to Thursday, 8:30AM to 4:00PM

9. What happened to my renewal? I started it yesterday and was going to pay today.

You must complete and pay for your renewal by 11:59PM PST on the day you start the renewal process. If you do not, it will be removed from the system, and you will need to restart the process.

10. Are there any fees associated with renewing online?

Yes. All debit and credit card transactions will be assessed a non-refundable 2.5% service fee. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

E-check payments will be assessed a convenience fee of \$2.25 per transaction.

11. I can't locate my business license number, but I want to renew online. What can I do?

The Finance Department sends a courtesy renewal notice to all active businesses in December. Please refer to the renewal form for your business license number.

12. Why can't I renew online?

The most common reasons for not being able to renew online are:

- Your business type is not currently eligible to renew online
- There is an outstanding balance on a previous year's license
- There is a gap year (in which you did not file your taxes)
- The last four of your SSN/FEIN do not match our records

13. I have an outstanding balance that I like to pay. Can I do this on the portal?

At this time, if there is an outstanding balance on a license, it makes the license ineligible to renew online.

Please make a check payable to City of Berkeley, reference your business license number and renewal year, and send to:

Finance Department
Revenue Collection
1947 Center Street, 1st Floor

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E-mail: onlinebusinesslicense@berkeleyca.gov | Website: www.berkeleyca.gov/finance

Berkeley, CA 94704

If you prefer to make the payment in person, you are welcome to visit the Customer Service Center at 1947 Center Street, 1st Floor. The hours of operation are Monday to Thursday, 8:30AM to 2:00PM.

14. Are there any time limitations regarding when I can renew?

Yes, at this time, you can renew your current year license which is based on gross receipts or payroll earned in the immediately preceding calendar year.

15. Why am I being charged for penalties and interest?

If full payment is not made before March 1, a 10% penalty of the outstanding tax balance is added.

If full payment is not received/postmarked before April 1, an additional 40% penalty of the outstanding tax balance is added.

Interest at the rate of 1% per month on the amount of fees and penalties continue to accrue until the balance is paid in full.

16. What are the consequences for not paying the tax?

The Berkeley Municipal Code requires the annual tax to be paid in full before March 1 of each year:

- The taxpayer is assessed a 10% penalty immediately upon becoming delinquent (as of March 1), and an additional 40% penalty if payment (as of April 1). All delinquent amounts are assessed interest at the rate of 1% per month, or fraction thereof.
- The City can pursue additional remedies for delinquent licenses, such as: Passing the debt, plus a \$125 administrative charge, to the County Auditor to collect on the next property tax bill
- Issuing a citation
- Filing a lawsuit

Remedies prescribed in the Berkeley Municipal Code are cumulative, and the Berkeley Municipal Code allows more than one to be used on a delinquent license.