



**Malton Women Council**

# **LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES**



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# What is the purpose of licensing and certification?

- Legal Requirements: Licensing and Registration are required by law for most businesses. Failure to follow these steps may lead to fines, closure, or legal action.
- Legitimacy and Trust: Licenses and certifications demonstrate professionalism and build trust with customers, partners, and investors. Trust and credibility can drive customers and allow you to charge more for your services.



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- Access to Services: A registered business is required to open a business bank account, apply for loans, and obtain insurance.
- Taxation and Compliance: A license helps you obtain a Business Number for collecting GST/HST and filing taxes.
- Industry-Specific Requirements: Some sectors, such as food, construction, childcare, and healthcare, legally require certifications or inspections.
- Funding and Government Programs: Grants and loans are often available to registered and licensed businesses.



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# What is the difference between a License and a Certificate?

	License	Certificate
<b>Definition</b>	Legal <b>permission</b> to operate a business or provide a regulated service	Proof of <b>knowledge or training, or qualification</b> in a specific skill or field
<b>Issuing Body</b>	Government or regulatory bodies at the municipal, provincial, or federal levels	Educational institutions, training organizations, and professional bodies
<b>Purpose</b>	Ensure compliance with laws and regulations	Demonstrate completion of the required education and training for business delivery





- For some businesses, a certification is required before obtaining a license. For other businesses, it is not required. Research to determine the requirements for your specific business.
- You can use BizPaL <https://bizpal.ca/> to specifically search for the licenses and permits you need. You may need to research certifications separately.

Note: In this document, certificate and certification are used interchangeably for simplicity. To learn about the specific differences between these terms, please visit:

<https://www.tradeready.ca/2016/topics/import-export-trade-management/certificate-vs-certification-whats-the-difference-and-why-does-it-matter-for-your-career-global-business-credentials/>






# Important Organizations in Ontario

Listed below are organizations you may come across in your business start-up journey:

1. Service Ontario – Business registration
2. Municipal Offices – Offer local business licenses, such as for food and home-based businesses. Cities and towns are responsible for regulating certain types of businesses.
3. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) – Provides support related to Business Number (BN) and GST/HST.

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4. The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is a regulatory body that oversees the safety and licensing of certain technical systems and equipment. Examples of licenses provided by the TSSA include:

- Fuel-Related Licenses –  
Applicable to businesses and individuals working with natural gas, propane, and heating oil.
- Elevating Devices Licenses –  
Applicable to companies that install, maintain, or inspect elevators, escalators, lifts, and other people-moving systems.



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5. Health Canada – Applicable to health/beauty, food, and pharmaceutical businesses. Medical Device Licenses for companies that manufacture, import, or sell medical devices such as surgical instruments and thermometers.

6. Food Safety Certifications – The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)** typically issues food safety certifications. **Health Canada** approves food additives, sets nutrition and labeling standards, and recalls unsafe food products.

7. Colleges of Trades – Applicable to professionals in a regulated trade, such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, etc.



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# Useful Certifications for Entrepreneurs

Depending on the nature of your business, you may consider obtaining the following:

- **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) / Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)** – Related to Hazardous Materials
- **Smart Serve** – Certification for alcohol service
- **Food Handler Certification** – Applicable to food-related businesses
- **First Aid & CPR**
- **Digital Marketing Certificates** – Examples include certificates by Google and Meta.
- **Women/Minority-Owned Certification** – For funding and procurement opportunities.



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# Costs of Licensing & Certification

The costs of obtaining a license or certification can vary. Listed below are a few costs to help guide you in the right direction:

Type	Approximate Cost
Business Name Registration	\$60-\$80
Municipal Business License	\$100-\$500+
CRA Business Number	Free
Food Handler Certification	\$30-\$60
Smart Serve	\$34.95
WHMIS Training	Free-\$40
First Aid/CPR	\$100-\$150





# Tips for Entrepreneurs

To ensure you are meeting the requirements, keep the following tips in mind:

- Register your business and obtain licensing and certification.
- Learn about local zoning and regulations
- Maintain appropriate bookkeeping
- Obtain insurance
- Keep licenses up to date
- Network and keep learning
- Do not ignore tax obligations
- Do not mix personal and business finances
- Do not ignore contracts
- Do not avoid seeking legal or professional advice







# Resources

- BizPaL <https://bizpal.ca/> Search for the licenses and permits you need.
- Government of Ontario Business Resources: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/start-business>
- Government of Canada Business Resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business.html>
- Small Business Centres Ontario: <https://www.sbcontario.ca/>  
Offers free consultations and workshops.
- PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise: Offers Resources for women. [www.paro.ca](http://www.paro.ca)
- Local Chambers of Commerce: Offer networking & mentorship opportunities. <https://occ.ca/>



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- Settlement Agencies: Offer support with integration into Canada and business basics.
- Peel Region Starting a home-based food business:  
<https://peelregion.ca/health/protecting-your-health/starting-home-based-food-business>
- Government of Ontario Food Handler Certificate:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/food-handler-training-and-certification>
- PTP Free Food Handler Certificate  
<https://ptp.ca/program/food-handler-certificate-lbs/>



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