

MINISTRY OF FINANCE  
THE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND REVENUE

# BUSINESS LICENCE PROCESS GUIDE



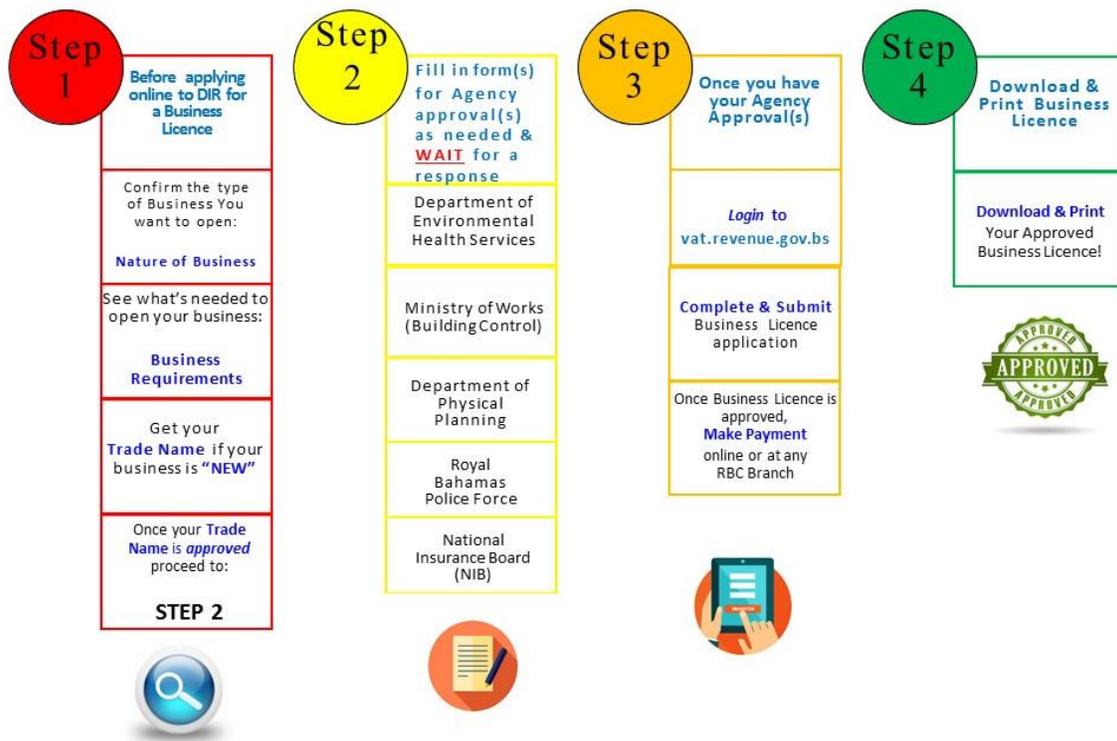
## Introduction

This Business Licence (BL) guide aims to provide a step by step outline for acquiring a Business Licence (BL) in The Bahamas. All business licence applications - “Annual, Temporary and Occasional” must be completed online via the Online Tax Administration System (OTAS).

## Overview of the process:

The following diagram provides a snapshot of the steps to acquire a business licence:

### Applying for a “New” Business Licence?



The requirements for a Business Licence may vary depending on the nature of your business. This guide should be reviewed in conjunction with the Nature of Business spreadsheet and Other Agency requirements, which can be found on the DIR website: [inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs](http://inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs) under the Business Licence Tab - Applying for a Business Licence.

After obtaining the necessary approvals based on your business requirements at [Step 3](#), you may access the Online Tax Administration System (OTAS) to register or log-in at: [vat.revenue.gov.bs](http://vat.revenue.gov.bs)

## For New (BL) Applications:

1. Review the [Nature of Business](#) online spreadsheet along with the [Other Agency](#) requirement guides on the DIR website ([inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs](http://inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs)).
2. Complete and submit the [Trade Name application](#) on the DIR website.
3. Click the [‘Create Account’](#) tab and create a user account. Fill in the account registration form online and submit by clicking [‘Create My Account’](#). You will receive a reply shortly to the email address you provided in the online form. The email will contain your username and provide further instructions.
4. Use your username and password to log-in to your online account. The first page will be [‘Getting Started’](#), here you will be provided with information, necessary documents and requirements you may need to proceed in completing the online registration.
5. Before you begin the Business Licence Registration process you will need to provide some taxpayer details online.
6. Enter your contact and additional details in the required fields in the online form.
7. After completing the Taxpayer Details you will proceed to the Business Licence tab.
8. Enter your Business Licence Registration Details e.g. (Bahamian/ Foreign owned)
9. Apply for the Business Licence by clicking the [‘Add New Licence’](#) tab. You may apply for more than one Business Licence at the same time using the [‘Add New Licence’](#) tab.
10. Select the type of Business Licence needed ([annual](#), [temporary](#), [occasional](#))
11. Enter the business information in the respective fields in the online form:
  - Business/Trade Name and any alternate trade names
  - Commencement date
  - Expiry Date

- Business NIB Number
- Expected turnover for next financial year

12. Upload one or more documents under the \**Supporting Documents*' section

- Proof of citizenship
- Approvals related to your selected business

13. Payment must be made upon approval of the application. See the section on 'Payment-BL'. Read the declaration and agree to the terms and conditions before submitting the online application.

14. Once all document requirements are met and approved, the application is then processed within 7 working days. The Business Licence Department will contact the applicant via the online user account for additional information or clarification if needed. You should regularly check your messages in your online account and the email address you provided for correspondence from the Department.

15. An electronic business licence certificate in the form of a PDF will be sent to your online user account and email address provided once all of the documents submitted are approved and the taxes due have been paid in full.

**\*SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS as per STEP 3:** May be scanned and uploaded in the *'Supporting Documents'* section of the online form). The following items may be uploaded in this section:

- Prerequisite Approval(s) from relevant government or regulatory agencies where required
- Copy of a Valid Passport or a copy of permanent resident certificate.
- National Insurance Card
- National Insurance Letter of Good Standing (no physical letter is required for submission. Verification checks will be completed between The DIR and NIB electronically. NIB Registration Applications can be accessed via The DIR's Website.
- Business Name - If you currently are the holder of a Business Name but owe arrears, these must be paid to the Registrar General's Department and the receipt indicating payment of arrears must be furnished.
- Certificate of Incorporation from the Registrar General's Department must accompany the application where applicable

- Real Property Tax - If the applicant owns the property on which the business is located, the real property tax account must be brought up to date or an agreement entered into for payment.

**Necessary Approvals** - If the business operates a STORE or other business operation - they must seek approval as follows:

- Department of Physical Planning (Zoning)
- Royal Bahamas Police Force (if alcoholic beverages are being sold and/ or music and dancing)
- Ministry of Public Works, Building Control (Inspection of Building)
- Department of Environmental Health Services (Sanitation Certificate)

Visit the **'How To-BL'** tab to view the video on how to complete your Online Business Licence application.

## For Renewal (BL) Applications:

### “Renewing” a Business Licence?

**Step 1**

**Ensure that your Agency approval(s) are up-to-date:**

Ministry of Works - (Building Controls)

Department of Physical Planning

Department of Environmental Health Services

Royal Bahamas Police Force Inspection & Licencing

NIB CONTRIBUTION STATUS

**Step 2**

**Once your Agency approval(s) are up-to-date:**

Log in to your account at [vat.revenue.gov.bs](http://vat.revenue.gov.bs) and submit a **“Renewal”** application under the Business Licence Tab. Be sure to upload additional documents where needed.

**Step 3**

**Check your Business Licence Status online:**

Log in to your email or **OTAS account** (Online Tax Administration System) at [vat.revenue.gov.bs](http://vat.revenue.gov.bs) for your Business Licence approval. Once approved, make payment online or at any RBC branch.

**Step 4**

**Get your Business Licence:**

Download and print your approved Business Licence!

1. Go to the *'Business Licence'* tab and select *"Renew Business Licence"* from the drop down list.
2. Click the *"Renew"* button next to Business licence you wish to renew.
3. If necessary make changes under the following options by clicking the (+) plus sign, then select the *"Save Changes"* button to proceed
  - Renewal Details
  - Business Information
  - Classification
  - Contact Details
  - Supporting Documents (\*must load at least one option here)
  - Branches
4. Once you have completed your business licence renewal requests click the *"Next"* button.
5. Select the *"Declaration"* box to indicate that the information provided is true, correct and complete.
6. Confirm that your details are correct by selecting the *"Show Application Summary"* button before submitting your request.
7. Click *"Submit Request"* to complete your Business Licence renewal application.
8. You will receive a renewal notification. Be sure to make note of your *"BLU" (Business Licence Renewal Request)* number for future reference.

## Contact Us

Further information can be obtained from the Taxpayer Services help desk: 1-242-225-7280

Or you can contact us by email: [taxinquiries@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:taxinquiries@bahamas.gov.bs)

Or you can write to:

Department of Inland Revenue  
Central Revenue Administration  
P.O. Box N 13  
Nassau, N.P., Bahamas

[www.inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs/business/licence/](http://www.inlandrevenue.finance.gov.bs/business/licence/)