

Registering and Licensing Your Food Business

As a small business owner, you will have to make some choices about which legal form you would like to operate your business.

There are four basic legal forms:

- Sole Proprietorship
- Partnership
- Corporation
- Limited Liability Company

In order to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each business form, and which would work best for your situation, see the *Question and Answer Guide for Starting and Growing Your Small Business* available through Virginia Cooperative Extension at http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/310/310-100/310-100_pdf.pdf.

It is recommended to consult an attorney, accountant, or any other professional that is familiar with food businesses to help ensure you are in compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations required of your business. The publication listed above discusses many of the areas you need to be familiar with in order to be in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Topics that are covered in the publication include: **Federal Employer ID Number, Licensing, Zoning, State Taxes, Virginia Employment Insurance, Workmen's Comp Insurance, Labor Regulations, and Trademark Registration**, to name a few.

A more complete Business Registration Guide is available at: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/clk/begin.aspx>.

This guide, titled the *Commonwealth of Virginia Business Registration Guide*, is published by the Virginia State Corporation Commission, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Virginia Department of Taxation. This guide gives not only advice on the registration process, but also provides many of the forms you will need to register.

Important: This section speaks only to registration and licensing of general businesses. More specific food-based registration requirements are discussed in the handout titled *Food Rules and Regulations: Registering Your Food Business*.