

A close-up photograph of a person's hands examining a light-colored garment on a wooden hanger. The hanger is part of a rack of clothes, with other hangers visible in the background. The background is softly blurred, showing a clothing store environment with warm lighting.

Retail Small Business Guide

Please note, this document is to be used only as a guide and a single source of resources list
Official approvals must be obtained by appropriate parties throughout the planning and
development process

CREATE YOUR BUSINESS

- Create a plan for the type of retail trade you would like to open. The [Small Business Centre](#) will be able to assist with any business planning needs.
- When starting a business you will need to choose a legal structure that will suit your business needs (i.e. Not for Profit, Limited Liability Company, Corporation, etc.).
- After confirming your business structure, visit [Service Ontario online](#) or in person to register your business name. You will also need to obtain your Master Business License.
- It is best to identify what permits and licenses you will be required to obtain. [BizPal](#) will be able to help your new business produce a personalized list of business permits and licenses you will need for all levels of government while starting up or growing your business.
- Apply for a Business Number. [The Canada Revenue Agency's Business Registration Online](#) is an all in one, online self serve application for registering for a Business Number. The site will also help with other program accounts including Corporation income tax, GST/HST, import and export, and payroll.
- Research the insurance you will need (i.e. employment insurance, workers compensation, etc.). Some of these insurance are required for permits and licenses. Visit [The Canadian Business Network](#) for assistance on business insurance.

PLAN YOUR SPACE

- Submit a [Pre-consultation Request Form](#) to book a pre-consultation for your business prior to confirming any purchase or lease of the business location. This step can save time, money, and disappointment later in the process by knowing all about the location of your future retail business. You can also reach the [Municipality of Lakeshore's Planning Department](#) by calling 519-728-1975 ext. 276 or in person at 419 Notre Dame Street, Belle River, Ontario, N0R 1A0.
- Opening your business in a Business Improvement Area? The [Belle River BIA](#) may have programs available for façade improvements, or broken windows that you may be eligible for.
- You may wish to have a licensed professional review your plan before any construction. Please be aware cosmetic changes can add time, paperwork, and additional costs, make sure you consider the impact of all changes on your budget and timeline.
- Upon being cleared by the planning department in your pre-consultation, move forward with signing a lease or purchasing the space for your new retail business.
- View the [Municipality of Lakeshore Inspector's Checklist](#) for help with what Building, Fire, and Public Health inspectors are often looking for.
- Speak with the Division Leader of Economic Development and Mobility about the potential for incentives and cost reductions available through the Municipality of Lakeshore. The Division Leader of Economic Development and Mobility can be reached by email at ecdev@lakeshore.ca or by phone at 519-728-2700 ext. 250.

APPLY FOR BUILDING PERMIT

An aerial view of a grocery store's produce section. The aisles are filled with long, low displays of various fruits and vegetables, including apples, oranges, and leafy greens. Several people are seen shopping, pushing carts through the aisles. The floor is a light-colored tile, and the lighting is bright and even.


- Construction requirements will be determined by the type of retail trade you plan to open.
- Consult a Fire Inspector if you are unsure what is needed. Visit the [Municipality of Lakeshore Fire Prevention](#) for more information.
- Submit all completed building permit applications to building@lakeshore.ca.
- For more information, visit [Building Permits](#) or call 519-728-2818 for additional help.

BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

- Once all plans are approved your Building Permits will be issued. ***All permits must be displayed at the worksite at all times.***
- Begin Construction. Make yourself aware of [your rights](#) when hiring a contractor to avoid construction overruns.
- Mandatory inspections will be required throughout construction. Your building permit will have a list of required mandatory inspections for the project. Please be aware you are required to book these inspections yourself. If you have hired a contractor make sure they are aware of the requirement to book these inspections to avoid time delays and unexpected charges. You can book an inspection appointment by calling 519-728-2818 ext. 1.
- Will you be installing a sign on the outside of the business, ensure you are complying with the Municipality of Lakeshore's [Sign By-law](#).



PREPARE TO OPEN

The background image shows a well-lit clothing store. The walls are made of light-colored wood. There are several clothing racks with various items, including jackets and shirts. A display table in the foreground has folded clothes on it. The floor is a light-colored wood or laminate. The overall atmosphere is clean and organized.

- Ensure all employees have taken all required courses for working in retail. [Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System\(WHMIS\)](#) is also required for all employees handling controlled products (i.e. chemicals used in cleaning and disinfecting, etc.).
- A health and safety program is required. As of July 1, 2014 every worker in Ontario must participate in health and safety awareness training. [Workplace Safety & Prevention Services](#) can assist you in preparing these programs. You can also call 1-877-494-9777.

A clothing boutique with a brick wall background. A row of long, colorful dresses (yellow, orange, pink, purple, blue, green) hangs on a rack against the wall. In the foreground, a metal cart holds several pairs of shoes. To the right, more clothes are hanging on a rack. The scene is lit with warm, natural light from a window on the left.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Continue to plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.

REMAINGING OPEN

- Remember to schedule equipment maintenance and renew your licenses and certifications.
- Inspections can happen at any time throughout the year. Be ready for random inspections. Avoid violations that are risky for customers and employees to save you time and money.
- Ensure you have posted your prices. Make sure the business sales receipt show the business name and address.
- Visit [Canada Revenue Agency](#) to learn more about preparing your income tax returns
- If the business owns the property, be prepared to pay property taxes. For more information about [Property Taxes](#).
- Any future updates to the business property will require a new building permit. Contact the [Building Department](#) to learn more.