

Alameda County Business Welcome Guide

A guide to doing business in the Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County

How Can We Help You? - Pip the Permit Penguin



Unincorporated Areas include Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, San Lorenzo, Sunol & Unincorporated East County

Welcome. Bienvenidos. 歡迎. Chào mừng. Maligayang pagdating.

We welcome you to unincorporated Alameda County and we appreciate seeing new residents and businesses. We created this welcome packet to help your business open and thrive in our vibrant communities.

We're here to help you get started!



Economic & Civic Development **Department**

The Economic & Civic Development Department (ECD) promotes economic development and public/private investment in the unincorporated communities of Alameda County. The unincorporated communities include Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, San Lorenzo, Sunol & Unincorporated East County.

ECD works to...

- Attract new businesses
- Help businesses expand
- Offer small business workshops
- Offer award-winning Food Training Academy
- Offer one-on-one business advising
- Attract new investment
- Find the perfect location for your business
- Be a liaison for property owners and real estate development projects
- Serve as your "Permit Coach"



Business Permit Coach:

ECD is committed to helping entrepreneurs & business owners open and expand. We coach you through the permit process from grand ideas to grand openings. We can help you when you don't know where to start, if you are stuck or when you need assistance looking for a location.



Meet our mascot, Pip the Permit Penguin!
How can we help you?

Contact Us!

Phone: (510) 670-6506 | kristin.perrault@acgov.org

Website: acgov.org/cda/ecd

Facebook: @AlamedaCountyECD



County Department **Contacts**

Departments

**Economic &
Civic Development**

Planning

Building

Environmental Health

Business License

Fire Department

Sheriff

Phone Numbers

(510) 670-6506

(510) 670-5400

(510) 670-5440

(510) 567-6700

(510) 670-6400

(925) 833-3473

(510) 667-7721

Websites

acgov.org/cda/ecd

acgov.org/cda/planning

acgov.org/pwa

acgov.org/aceh

buslctax.acgov.org

alamedacountyfire.gov

alamedasheriff.gov



How to Start a *Business*



1. *Write a Business Plan*

You should first develop a business plan to estimate how much money you will need to invest and how much money you will make over the next few years. For assistance visit ***sba.gov***

2. *Choose a Location*

Economic development staff (ECD), commercial brokers, and the Internet are all resources to help you find a location for your business. ***Start with ECD!***

Before Signing a Lease - *Check the Zoning!*

You should contact the Planning Department to make certain that the location you are considering is zoned for your particular business.

Planning Department | Phone: (510) 670-5400

3. *Select a Business Structure*

Which business structure makes the most sense for your business?

Find out more about business structures, such as sole proprietorship, partnership, C Corporation, S Corporation, and Limited Liability Company at the Small Business Administration at ***sba.gov*** or the California Secretary of State at ***sos.ca.gov/business/be***

4. *Choose a Business Name*

To make sure your business name isn't already taken, check the Fictitious Business Name online database with the Clerk Recorder's Office at ***acgov.org/business/fictitious.htm***



5. **Select a Fictitious Business Name Statement**

Everyone will need to file a fictitious business name statement, unless your business name includes your last name.

Online Submission | The forms and instructions for the Fictitious Business Name Statement are available online or at the County Clerk-Recorder's office in Oakland or Dublin.
acgov.org/auditor/clerk/fbn/index.htm

In-Person Submission | You may pick up forms/instructions at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office in Dublin or Oakland. Completed forms must be submitted to the Oakland Office.

Dublin Office: **7600 Dublin Boulevard, Dublin**
Oakland office: **1106 Madison Street, Oakland**

6. **Research Permit Requirements**

Food Sales Permit – If you are going to sell food you will need to obtain permits from the Environmental Health Department
(510) 567-6700 | acgov.org/aceh/food



How to Start a ***Business Continued***

Planning Permits – Every business will want to check with the Planning Department regarding their specific permits for operating.

Use the checklist of questions below when speaking to a planner

Phone: (510) 670-5400 | acgov.org/cda/planning



Checklist of Questions to Ask a Planner

- ☐ What is the zoning (What am I allowed to do/What type of business am I allowed to have at "123 Main Street"?) - Be sure to describe your business in detail.
- ☐ Is the property located in a Specific Plan?
- ☐ What applications are required for my type of business?
- ☐ What are the planning fees?
- ☐ After I submit my plans, how long will it take to hear from a planner?
- ☐ Are there any community reviews or public hearings that my plans will need to go to?
- ☐ Who else should I speak to? (Fire, Building, Environmental Health, Business Licensing, CV San, Oro Loma, East Bay MUD)



How to Start a ***Business Continued***

Other Types of Permits – In addition to planning permits, business owners may need permits from Building and Fire. A planner and permit coach will be able to direct you.

Planning | (510) 670-5400

Permit Coach | (510) 670-6506

7 • Research State Licenses & Permits

Certain professions and businesses require state licenses.

For specific information, the CalGOLD database ***calgold.ca.gov*** connects you to agencies that issue business permits, licenses and registration requirements for these state licenses.



Seller's Permit and Resale Numbers – If you sell a product that requires collection of state sales taxes, you must obtain a seller's permit from the California State Department of Tax and Fee Administration. ***cdtfa.ca.gov/taxes-and-fees/faqseller.htm***



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
TAX AND FEE ADMINISTRATION**

How to Start a *Business Continued*

Alcohol Sales License – For alcohol sales, an Alcoholic Beverage License is required. Contact the California Department of Alcohol & Beverage Control at ***abc.ca.gov*** and click on “Business”.

Phone: (916) 263-6882

You will also need an Alameda County permit to sell alcohol for on-site or off-site consumption.

Contact Planning Department for information.

Phone: (510) 670-5400



8. Obtain a Business License

In order to run a business in Unincorporated Alameda County, you must obtain a business license from Alameda County.

Call or Apply online

Phone: (510) 670-6400 | *buslictax.acgov.org*

Additional business decisions to consider:

- Do I need to file for ***Business Personal Property Taxes(BPP)***

BPP refers to assets that are used in the operation of a business?

Visit: acassessor.org/bpp-general-2 to find out if you do or not.

- Do I need a ***Employee Employer Identification Number (EIN)?***

EIN is a nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to identify a business or other entity for tax purposes.

Visit: irs.gov/businesses/employer-identification-number to find out if you need one or not.



**Pacific Gas and
Electric Company®**

ELECTRICITY/GAS

pge.com | (800)468-4743



Alameda County Industries

GARBAGE/SANITATION

alamedacountyindustries.com | (510) 483-1400



GARBAGE/SEWER

cvsan.org | (510) 537-0757



GARBAGE/SEWER

oroloma.org | (510) 276-4700



WATER

ebmud.com | (866) 403-2683



PHONES/INTERNET

business.comcast.com | (855) 201-9567



AT&T

att.com/smallbusiness | (888) 944-0447

The Castro Valley/Eden Area Chamber of Commerce promotes economic and civic pride in the unincorporated County.

Contact Them at...

Phone: (510) 537-5300 | **Website:** edenareachamber.com | **Facebook:** @EdenAreaChamber



Alameda County Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

supports local entrepreneurs and small businesses with the tools and insights to start, grow, and pivot their businesses.

Contact Them at...

Phone: (510) 885-4801 | **Website:** eastbaysbdc.org | **Facebook:** @AskSBDC



Alameda County Workforce Development Board provides workforce development programs for job seekers and workers in Alameda County. They also provide employment placement, job fairs & networking opportunities.

Contact Them at...

Phone: (510) 259-3842 | **Website:** acwddb.org | **Facebook:** @acwddb



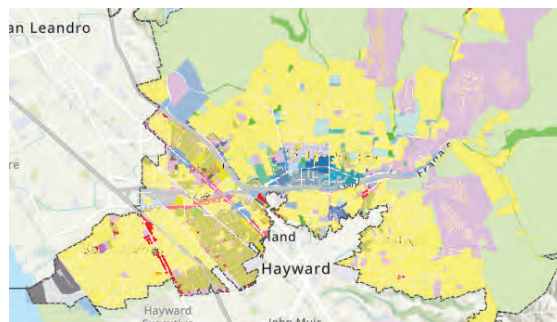
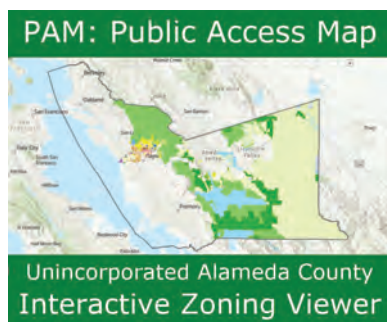
Other *Resources*

Public Access Map (PAM) is an interactive public access map that allows users to check the zoning of any business or residents in the Unincorporated County. If you own or are looking to purchase property, it's important to know what uses can and cannot take place!

Visit:

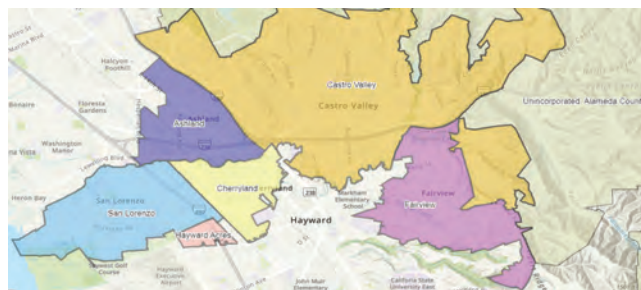
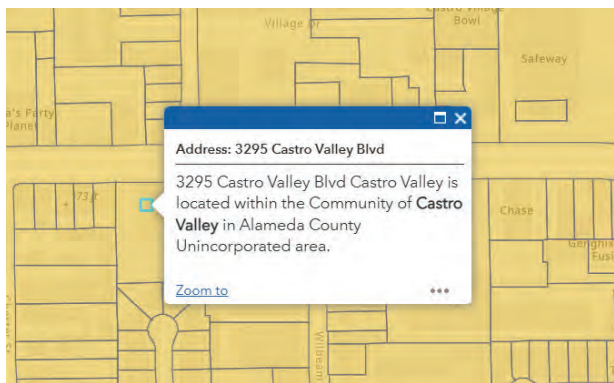
www.acgov.org/cda/planning

Click on this icon



Community Locator is an interactive website that can verify whether or not a property being considered to open or relocate a business is in the unincorporated County boundaries.

Website: communitylocator.acgov.org



Free Mobile Food Business Permit Information Session

Come to a FREE Info-session, on the first Wednesday of every month from 10:00 - 11:00 AM at the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health,

Location: 1131 Harbor Bay Parkway, Alameda, Room 106

For more information | Visit deh.acgov.org/operations/mff.page

Business Permit Glossary

This glossary does not list **every** possible permit that you may need but it defines the most common ones. **Every business permitting journey is unique** and each applicant will receive specific instructions and permit requirements related to their business, specific to their location.

Planning Permits

Standard Application:

Used to apply for one or more of the following: Boundary Adjustment, Subdivision, Conditional Use Permit, Variance, Site Development Review, Rezoning, Administrative Conditional Use Permit, Sign Review, Zoning Verification Letter, etc.

Administrative Conditional Use Permit:

Allows specific temporary or minor land uses:

- Seasonal sales lots (e.g., Christmas trees, firewood, pumpkins)
- Temporary events or signage (e.g., block parties, weddings, banners, directional signs)

Administrative Minor Use Permit:

Provides streamlined regulatory relief to support business recovery and long-term operations.

- Transition from temporary to permanent outdoor dining, retail, and signage
- Internal staff review process—no public hearings required
- Planning Director authority to approve new entertainment options for restaurants
- Allows more permanent outdoor uses (e.g., using parking lots for events or food vendors)

Conditional Use Permit:

Allows the evaluation certain land uses for compatibility with surrounding areas.

Conditions may be applied regarding design, operations, or duration to ensure appropriate integration.

Minor Use Permit:

Ensures that proposed land uses or buildings are well-integrated with their sites and surroundings, including nearby development and traffic flow.

Site Development Review:

Ensures new buildings and land uses are compatible with the physical site, surrounding environment, neighboring development, and traffic patterns.

Temporary Use Permit (TUP):

Allows short-term activities that are not appropriate as permanent uses but are consistent with the goals of the Ashland and Cherryland Business Districts Specific Plan. Examples include temporary markets, pop-up events, or seasonal activities.

Variance:

A request for an exception to zoning rules to address a specific hardship. For instance, a homeowner may request to build beyond allowable lot coverage due to unique property constraints.

Building Permits

Building Plan Check:

Is the process where a jurisdiction reviews submitted building plans to ensure they comply with relevant building codes and regulations before a building permit is issued. This review process is a crucial step in obtaining a building permit and ensures that the proposed construction is safe and meets legal standards.

Building Inspection Permit:

Provides permission to construct, alter, or demolish a building or structure, ensuring it meets safety and code requirements

Encroachment Permit:

Allows a person or organization to temporarily or permanently use a public right-of-way or County-owned property for a specific purpose. This permit is typically required for any work that affects public property, including sidewalks, streets, and other areas within the public right-of-way

Fire Permits

Fire construction and/or operational permits may be required for your project. You can reach out to County Fire Code Administration Staff at countyfca@alamedacountyfire.gov to determine permits that might apply for your project.

Most common construction permits: Temporary tents, fires sprinklers and fire alarm permits

Most common operations permits: Flammable combustible liquids and compressed gases

Enviromental Health Permits

Fixed Food Facility:

Required for any establishment that prepares, stores, or serves food for retail sale or consumption on or off the premises. This includes restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, and other similar businesses to ensure that the facility meets health and safety standards, including proper sanitation, equipment, and operational procedures

Mobile Food Facility Permit (MFF):

Authorizes a mobile food business, like a food truck or cart, to operate and sell food to the public. This permit ensures the mobile food unit adheres to health and safety standards, including proper food handling and sanitation procedures

Temporary Food Facility (TFF):

Required for any event where food or beverages are sold or given away to the public. This includes events like festivals, farmers' markets, and community gatherings.

Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO) Permit:

Allows people to operate a food business, including preparation, handling, and serving, from their home kitchen.

Cottage Food Operation (CFO) Permit:

Allows people to operate a home-based food business that produces, processes, packages, and labels certain types of non-potentially hazardous foods for sale to consumers. These operations are limited to specific foods that don't require refrigeration and are typically made in small quantities

Pip's Business Corridor Clean-up **Directory**



Pip the Permit Penguin wants to help keep our businesses clean & tidy!

Abandoned Vehicles on Private Property

(510) 670-5460

Abandoned Vehicles on Public Roads

(510) 667-7869

Building Inspections & Complaints

(510) 670-5440

Graffiti Abatement, Shopping Cart Retrieval, Street Sweeping, Street Light Malfunction Street Name Signs (damaged or missing)

(510) 670-5500

Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

(510) 670-6460

Mobile Citizen APP Alameda County utilizes a Mobile Citizen app that allows the public to report potholes, graffiti, and illegal dumping to the County's Public Works Agency. The app can be downloaded by searching "mobile citizen" in your phone's app store.





In partnership with the Alameda County permitting departments

