



NEW BUSINESS INFORMATION PACKET

ALL GOOD THINGS CLOSE TO HOME



"A Community Is People Helping People."

The Mayor and City Council welcome you to Oak Forest.

Inside, you will find the tools you need to go from scouting locations to becoming a part of our business community.

Whether you are an entrepreneur seeking to test a new venture or an established business owner planning to expand or find a new location, we are here to better serve you.

Your questions, answered:

- ① What do I need to get started? **BUSINESS ESSENTIALS**
- ② Where can I open my business? **ZONING**
- ③ How do I open my business? **OCCUPANCY**
- ④ What kind of sign can I have? **SIGNS**
 - What can I do for my grand opening? . . . **TEMPORARY SIGNS**
 - Who can I contact if I have questions? **CONTACTS**

Other important forms and materials:

- Business License Application. **CLERK'S OFFICE**
- Liquor/Gaming License Application. **MAYOR'S OFFICE**
- Building Permit Application. **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**
- Sign Permit Applications. **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**
- Oak Forest - Crestwood Area
Chamber of Commerce
Membership Application. **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

How do I open my business?



What is a Federal Tax Number or FEIN?

A Federal Tax Number, Employer Identification Number, or FEIN, is a unique number given to every business registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This number can be obtained for free through the IRS website.

www.irs.gov

Search "how to apply for an EIN" in the search bar

Do I need to register with the State of Illinois?

Yes. To conduct business in Illinois or with Illinois consumers, you must register with the Illinois Department of Revenue. Registration can be done for free through the Illinois Department of Revenue's website.

www.revenue.state.il.us

Search "business registration" in the search bar

Do I need an Illinois Retail Occupation Tax Number?

If your business will be selling tangible, personal property for use or consumption to Illinois residents, you must register for an Illinois Retail Occupation Tax Number (ROTN). This is required information for the city's Business License Application.

<http://tax.illinois.gov/Businesses/TaxInformation/>

Scroll down and click "Sales & Use Taxes"

How do I know if my space has a fire sprinkler system?

If you are considering leasing a space or purchasing a building, ask the property owner or real estate agent if the building has a fire sprinkler system. A fire sprinkler system may be a required installation depending on the square footage of the space your business will occupy, or the type of business. The Fire Department will determine this during the initial inspection upon submittal of your Business License Application.

How do I know if my space has a fire alarm system?

If you are considering leasing a space or purchasing a building, ask the property owner or real estate agent if a fire alarm system is in place. A fire alarm system is required to be installed if not already in place, or an upgrade to the existing system may be required. The Fire Department will determine this during the initial inspection upon submittal of your Business License Application.

What is a KNOX lock box?

A KNOX lock box is a tool used to provide the Fire and Police Departments emergency access to commercial property and is required by city code. If you are leasing a commercial tenant space, contact your landlord to find out if one is available. If you recently purchased your property where you will conduct business, you will need to purchase one if one is not already on site.

www.knoxbox.com

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ZONING

Where can I open my business?

Where can I open my business? What can I do on my property?

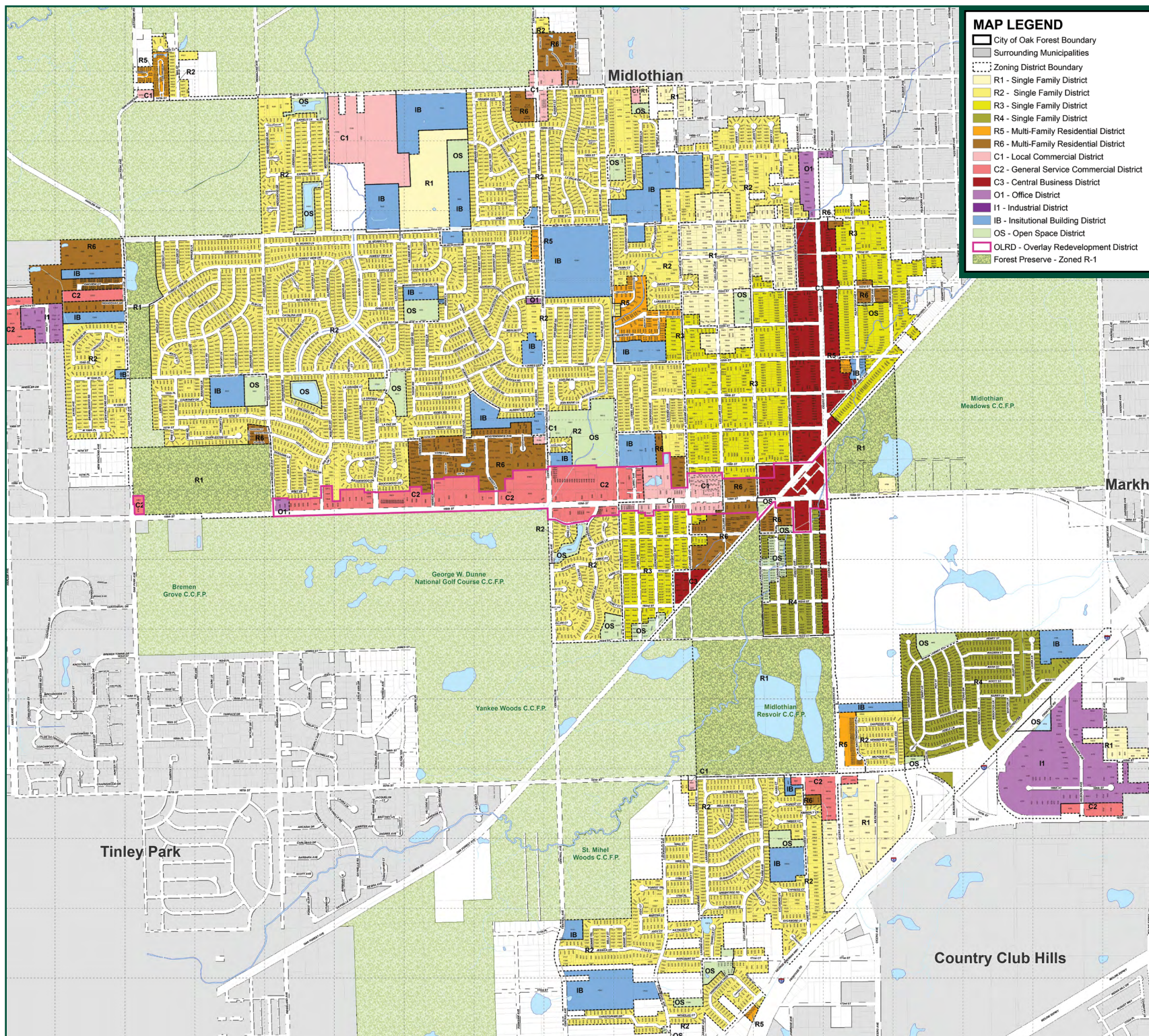
If you are interested in a location, first check if your business is permitted at that location. Visit www.oak-forest.org/zoning and scroll down to the Zoning Map, then enter your address in the upper right search bar of the on-screen map.

The Map Legend indicates which colors on the map correspond with each zoning district. The Community Development Department enforces the Zoning Ordinance, which describes the types of businesses and/or housing of each district and other regulations, such as landscaping, parking, and signage.

Once you know the district, click *Appendix A, Table of Uses*. Some business types require Special Use Permit (SUP) approval, as indicated by the letter S in the corresponding box in *Appendix A*.

Before signing a lease or contract to purchase a location, contact the Community Development Department. If you are unsure of how your business is classified or if your business may require SUP approval, they can provide additional guidance during your location search.

See next page for Zoning Map.



How do I open my business?

Before opening your business, a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) must be issued by the Building Department. "Simple occupancy" requires only completing minor repair or maintenance work to the interior of an existing tenant space, such as painting or reflooring. The list of items to the right will be checked for compliance upon the required initial walk-through inspection. **All contractors must register with the Building Department before completing any work.**

- ADA-compliant Door Hardware
- ADA-compliant Thresholds
- Operational Emergency Signs (Exit and EM Lights)
- Electric Panel with Updated Directory
- Post Office Addresses (front and back doors)
- Bathroom Compliance (includes signage)
- Operational Fire Alarm System
- Fire Extinguishers with Service Tags
- New Keys in KNOX Lock Box

Steps to Certificate of Occupancy Issuance (No Permits)

Step 1: Check if your business is permitted where you want to open. Refer to the **Zoning Map**.

Step 2: Address the bulleted list of items to the left and submit a completed Business License Application.

Step 3: Attend required initial walk-through inspection with the Building and Fire Departments (and health inspector, if needed). We will call you to schedule the initial inspection.

Step 4: Address any outstanding items found by the inspectors and file any permits if required (refer to Permits Required steps below).

Step 5: Schedule, attend and pass inspections upon completion of work.

Step 6: Upon passing final inspections and Certificate of Occupancy issuance, the Clerk's Office will contact you to pick-up and pay for your Business License.

Is a building permit required?

If the work required for your business location requires building permits, a completed Building Permit Application must be submitted with **two sets** of architectural plans, including the following:

- Electrical service diagram and reflected ceiling plans
- Plumbing - riser and underground
- Structural - wall sections, floors plans, and elevations
- Mechanical - HVAC site and location
- Fire alarm and/or fire sprinkler plans. Submit to FSCI for review. Contact at (847) 697-1300 (3 plan sets required).

All plans must be dimensioned and drawn on 36x24" paper, individually rolled with title block facing out. One or two page plan sets may be folded with the architect's seal and signature facing out. All existing systems or structures must be shown and labeled as "existing." All proposed work must be shown and labeled as "proposed." You can find permit applications online in the Building Department's Permit & Form Center. If you are leasing your location, plans may require landlord approval before filing plans with the Building Department.

www.oak-forest.org/permitformcenter

Steps to Certificate of Occupancy Issuance (Permits Required)

Step 1: File required plans as listed on the left with a complete Building Permit Application.

Step 2: Complete any required revisions to plans upon receipt of comments.

Step 3: Upon receiving permit approval notification, pick-up Building Permit and pay required fees. **Permits will not be issued unless applicable contractor is registered.**

Step 4: Begin work as authorized on applicable permit(s) and post permit(s) in required visible location.

Step 5: Schedule, attend and pass inspections upon completion of work.

Step 6: Upon passing final inspections and Certificate of Occupancy issuance, the Clerk's Office will contact you to pick-up and pay for your Business License.

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SIGNS

What kind of sign can I have?

Wall Signs

Wall signs **require a permit**. Permanent wall signs can be installed onto any wall facing a street, parking area, or with a building entrance. Typical construction methods include channel letters or cabinet boxes. The size of a new wall sign is dependent upon the length of the frontage to which it will be attached.



Other Permanent Signs

Awnings and projecting signs are **allowed with permit approval**. Window signs do not require a permit and must be no more than 25 percent of the window area.



Ground Signs

Ground signs **require a permit**. Permanent ground signs can be installed on any property with a minimum of 100 feet of frontage along a street. Ground signs must be constructed with a base of brick, stone, or other durable material; may be up to 100 sq. ft. in size; and no more than 10 feet tall.



Electronic Message Centers (EMCs)

EMCs may be installed on ground signs provided they are no larger than 40 percent of the area of the ground sign.

Facade Improvement Grant

Refer to the [Facade Improvement Grant Guide](#) for additional information. This grant offers up to 50 percent reimbursement for ground signs replacing pole signs.

If you are leasing your space, check with your landlord before installing any signs.

Prohibited Signs

Wood, plastic, or other combustible materials are not allowed. **Neon or LED tube lights are also not allowed.**



TEMPORARY SIGNS

What can I do for my grand opening?

ALLOWED



A-FRAME

PERMIT REQUIRED



BANNER

PERMIT REQUIRED



BANNER STAND

PERMIT REQUIRED



FEATHER FLAG

PERMIT REQUIRED



HANDHELD/SIGN WALKER



YARD/PIN

PERMIT REQUIRED
FOR SIGNS > 6 FT²

GENERAL STANDARDS

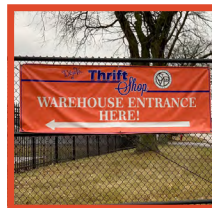
- All temporary signs shall be non-illuminated.
- All ground signs shall be no closer than five (5) feet from the paved portion of any street or back of curb where no sidewalk is present, no closer than two (2) feet from a sidewalk, and shall be on private property.
- All signs shall not be allowed within any sight triangle of an entrance or intersection.
- All signs shall be securely anchored to either the ground or building wall to which they are attached so as to withstand weather conditions.
- Properties cannot install more than two temporary sign types per temporary sign permit.

PROHIBITED

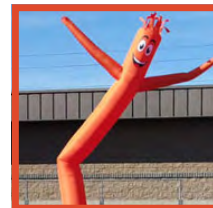


ATTENTION-GETTING DEVICE

(STREAMERS, BALLOONS, RIBBONS, SPINNERS, OTHER ATTENTION-GETTING DEVICES THAT MOVE OR BLINK, ETC.)



FENCE SIGN



INFLATABLE



SIGNS ON POLES

For the complete Temporary Sign Guidelines and Application, please visit www.oak-forest.org/tempsign.



CONTACTS

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Clerk's Office | Business Licensing & Required Fees

For general questions about business licensing, contact the Clerk's Office at (708) 687-4050 extension 1024.

Community Development Department | Zoning & Signs

If you are looking for a location or have questions about locally offered incentives, contact the Director of Economic & Community Development at (708) 444-4807.

For exact requirements pertaining to Zoning, Signs or Temporary Signs, please visit www.oak-forest.org/zoning. Contact Planning at (708) 444-4848 for additional questions.

Building Department

Please visit www.oak-forest.org/constructionfees for permit and construction fees. If you have questions regarding the permit process, plan requirements, registered contractors, and contractor registration, please contact the Building Department at (708) 444-4818.

Fire Department

For tips for preparing your business for the initial fire safety inspection, please visit www.oak-forest.org/firechecklist. If you have additional questions regarding the city's fire prevention policies and requirements, please contact the Fire Department at (708) 687-6050 extension 1901.

Mayor's Office | Liquor/Gaming Licensing

For general questions about liquor/gaming licensing, contact the Mayor's Office at (708) 687-4050 extension 1005.