

Step 21 · Permits

Frequently Asked Questions

What permits do I need for a coffee cart or trailer?

Ask the responsible food authority to review your exact menu, unit, base, and selling locations before you build or buy. Check business registration, tax, zoning, fire, and vending requirements with the offices that control them. Get the current sequence and conditions in writing. A private event, coffee-only menu, or seller's promise does not establish an exemption or permission to operate.

Should I be a sole proprietor, an LLC, or an S corporation?

Choose with an accountant and business attorney who understand your ownership, risk, and tax position. In the United States, the legal entity and its tax treatment are related but different choices; an LLC can have different tax classifications. Another owner's choice is not a rule for you. Formation also does not replace permits, insurance, or clear agreements between owners.

Can my coffee shop use a different name from its legal business name?

Yes, but check the required registration where you operate. In the United States, an assumed name or DBA may be required when the trading name differs from the legal name. A DBA filing, entity name, domain, and trademark serve different purposes. Confirm name availability and legal use before spending heavily on signs, packaging, or branding.

Does my coffee shop need health-department approval or an agriculture license?

The responsible agency depends on your location and what you actually prepare and sell. Give the agencies the same complete menu and process description, including brought-in food, storage, and washing. Ask them to confirm who regulates each activity. A landlord's experience with another tenant does not settle it, and a food license does not resolve separate plumbing or wastewater requirements.

Educational guidance. Check your own circumstances with the appropriate local professional.