

Better Business for All



The **Better Business for All** initiative aims to enhance relationships between Hertfordshire businesses and Local Authority regulators (i.e. Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Fire Safety, Licensing and others). The purpose is to create a shared desire to improve – in terms of delivering effective regulatory services and ensuring Hertfordshire businesses are aware of how to be compliant.

In turn, this reduces the regulatory burden on businesses, supports business productivity and

growth and helps regulators to better understand the challenges businesses face.

You can keep up with the campaign on twitter **#BetterRegulation** and follow **@BbfaHerts**

You can also contact us at **bbfa@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

And check out the website at **www.hertfordshirelep.com/Better-Regulation.aspx**



Building Control / Planning



Planning

Most new buildings or major changes to existing buildings or to the local environment need consent - known as planning permission. Without a planning system everyone could construct buildings or use land in any way they wanted, no matter what effect this would have on other people who live and work in their area.

When will I need planning permission?

There is no set answer for this as it varies depending on what kind of use or development is proposed. The first step would be to check the Planning Portal website **www.planningportal.gov.uk** and then, if you are still not sure, check with your District Council planning team.

How do I make a planning application?

You can submit a planning application directly through the Planning Portal and it will be received by the correct District Council.

Why is Planning covered by both District and County Council in Hertfordshire?

The County Council deal with planning applications for minerals (e.g. for a quarry) and waste (e.g. a recycling facility.) District Councils deal with nearly all other planning. It is most likely that you would need to speak to your District Council for a planning application.

Building Control

What is Building Control?

Building Control and planning permission are different processes and sometimes you may need both. Building Control (or sometimes referred to as building regulations) ensures that any changes to a property or any new buildings built are in line with current legislation and that changes are made to a high standard.

When would I need to contact Building Control?

You would usually need approval from Building Control to construct new buildings or to add extensions or make alterations to existing buildings. Check with your District Council's Building Control Team to find out if a Building Regulations application is required.

Hertfordshire Resilience

Disruption to your organisation could take many forms, from the relatively limited disruption caused by wintry weather or an outbreak like swine flu, to the large-scale impact of emergencies such as the recent floods or the Buncefield explosion.

All emergencies are different however they do tend to present similar challenges, particularly in the early stages. Planning how you would cope doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming.

Large organisations often employ resilience planners, but reality for most small and medium sized organisations is that running the day to day operation is the main concern. That's why we have tried to make things easier by posting a range of resources online to help you get started.

www.hertsdirect.org/businesscontinuity



Trading Standards



If the goods or services that you provide are eventually sold to the public, it is likely that Trading Standards can help you with advice on the relevant consumer protection laws that apply to your business.

In Hertfordshire, the County Council has responsibility for Trading Standards across the whole County – so don't contact your District Council if you want to speak to Trading Standards. They have a team of experienced staff dedicated solely to supporting new and existing business comply with the wide range of consumer protection legislation.

Trading Standards enforce and can advise on legislation across a wide range of areas;

- Product Safety
- Fair Trading
- Weights & Measures
- Age Restricted Products
- Consumer Credit
- Food Standards / Quality
- Terms & Conditions / Selling online
- Animal Health / Animal Feed / Pet Food
- Intellectual Property

The Trading Standards pages on The County Council's website has a wide range of information for businesses.

www.hertsdirect.org/business/tradingstandards/bus

Trading Standards Business Advice Line:
01707 281401

Business Rates

Business rates are a tax on property used for business purposes. They are charged on properties such as offices, shops, pubs, and warehouses – most non-domestic properties will attract business rates. They may also be charged where only part of a building is used for non-domestic purposes. If you're a small business, you may be eligible for **Small Business Rate relief**.

Further information on all types of rate relief can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-business-rate-relief>

Fire Protection



If you own, manage or operate a business you will need to comply with fire safety law. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force in October 2006 and applies to all non-domestic premises across England and Wales.

The Order places the emphasis on fire risk reduction and fire prevention. The requirement for businesses to have a Fire Certificate was repealed by the Order, instead those responsible for commercial buildings, ie the employer, owner, managing agent or any other person who has control of any part of the premises, including communal areas and Houses in Multiple Occupation, are required to carry out a fire risk assessment. This assessment should identify any fire risks and hazards in the premises.

A set of guides has been published to tell you what you need to do to comply with this fire safety law, help you carry out a fire risk assessment and identify general fire precautions.

These can be found at **www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities**

Advice or further information can be gained by contacting the Fire Protection Department on **01707 292310** or by visiting **www.hertsdirect.org/fire**



Acas provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law

Acas support good relationships between employers and employees which underpin business.

But when things go wrong they can also help by providing conciliation to help resolve workplace problems. They also provide good value, high quality training and tailored advice to employers.

You can call an Acas helpline adviser on **0300 123 1100** (8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-1pm Saturday).

For further information: **www.acas.org.uk**

Licensing



A licence to run a business (or part of a business) may be required for certain types of activities. It will usually be the District Council in whose area you wish to operate that is the Licensing Authority.

What type of businesses need a licence?

- Selling alcohol (Pubs, Bars, Night Clubs, Restaurants, Off licences etc)
- Selling hot food or drink at any time between 23:00-05:00 (Restaurants, pubs, take aways, food delivery services etc)
- Entertainment (showing films, playing recorded music, some live music, performances of dance, boxing and wrestling, indoor sporting events)
- Gambling (casino, bingo, betting shops, race tracks etc). Remember: before you can get a licence for a gambling premises you first need to make an application to the Gambling Commission for an Operators Licence

You may also need a licence if your business is in one of these areas, but it varies by District Council so speak to your Council first:

- Market and mobile trading, and street cafes
- Driving a taxi
- Animal boarding (cats & dogs), animal breeding (dogs), pet shops and zoos
- Operating a horse riding establishment
- Keeping a dangerous wild animal
- Street trading and distribution of printed material
- Charitable street collections and house to house collections for charity
- Special treatments and skin piercing (including acupuncture, electrolysis, body or ear piercing, tattooing)
- Hairdressing and barbering
- Sex shops, sex cinemas and lap dancing
- Motor salvage and scrap metal dealing

There are also national authorities for various types of business, such as:

- The Gambling Commission
- Security Industry Authority (for door supervisors)
- Environment Agency

Highways

As the authority responsible for highways in Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council operates several services that business may need to access through the course of their business.

Some of the key ones include:

- **Skip licences: A skip licence is necessary when a skip is placed on the highway.**
- **Scaffold, hoarding and mobile crane licences.**
- **Street café licences.**

Environmental Health



What is Environmental Health?

Environmental Health departments are based in your district councils and work to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents, traders, workers and visitors to Hertfordshire. This includes supporting businesses to comply with legislation to make sure your workplace is safe, any food sold is safe and hygienic and that any pests, waste and noise are controlled.

Some of their work is proactive – so you may get an officer calling round to see you if you run a food business, and some is reactive – so if an employee or member of the public has an accident or someone complains they will get in contact. In all situations we would encourage you to call and speak to them if you have any questions and need advice as it could well save you money – you can find their details on the contacts sections of this Z-card.

Generally, Environmental Health covers the following areas:

- Health & Safety in workplaces such as shops, offices and warehouses (some workplaces are regulated by the health and Safety Executive but do call to check)
- Food safety and hygiene – all food businesses need to register with Environmental Health
- Pollution of the environment – some businesses such as dry cleaners and paint sprayers need a permit
- Ear piercing / Electrolysis / Tattooing / Body Piercing
- Nuisances such as noise, dust and odour
- Pest control
- Animal boarding / Kennels / Catteries

Hertfordshire Trading Standards and Which? Trusted Traders



Hertfordshire Trading Standards work in partnership with Which? Trusted Traders to run a joint endorsement scheme that recognises trustworthy traders in Hertfordshire.

Only traders who reach the high standards of the scheme are endorsed.

An endorsement from both Hertfordshire Trading Standards and Which? Trusted Traders can give your customers confidence and added reassurance.

Benefits of the scheme include -

- The ability to use the joint scheme endorsement logo (above).

- The scheme is completely free to use for all consumers, not just Which? members.
- Your business will also be listed on the main Which? Trusted Traders website that is also accessible via the Hertfordshire County Council website.
- Assistance dealing with disputes that you have not been able to resolve adequately by having access to an independent Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR) Service.
- A dedicated account manager at Which? to liaise with and who can help make sure you make the most of your endorsement.

- Regular updates on changes to the law that may affect your business.

As part of the requirements of the scheme here in Hertfordshire, businesses undergo an assessment by a Trading Standards professional and are asked to undergo a DBS check, as well as intelligence checks that are carried out by Hertfordshire Trading Standards.

For more information about the scheme, please visit the dedicated website - <https://trustedtraders.which.co.uk/for-traders/hertfordshire>

Useful Contacts & Websites

Federation of Small Businesses
www.fsb.org.uk

Food Standards Agency
Guidance and advice on food law
www.food.gov.uk

Gambling Commission
Regulator for commercial gambling
www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

GOV.uk
The portal to all central government services including:

- Companies House: Information and advice on legal matters relating to companies
- Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs: Information and advice on environmental, food and rural issues (includes the work of the Environment Agency)
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills: Wide ranging advice, including details on the Primary Authority scheme
- HM Revenue and Customs: Advice on tax, VAT and National Insurance

• UK Trade and Investment – works with UK business to ensure their success in international markets through exports www.gov.uk

Health and Safety Executive –
National regulator for health and safety matters
www.hse.gov.uk

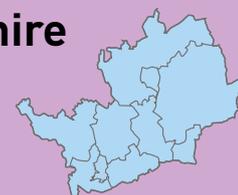
Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
www.hertschamber.com

Hertfordshire Growth Hub –
Partnership providing support for business growth
www.hertsgrowthhub.com

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
www.hertfordshirelep.com

Legislation.gov.uk -
Home to all UK legislation
www.legislation.gov.uk

Hertfordshire District Councils



Contacts for most licensing, environmental health, planning and building control issues.

Broxbourne	01992 785555
Dacorum	01442 228000
East Herts	01279 655261
Hertsmere	0208 207 2277
North Herts	01462 474000
St Albans	01727 866100
Stevenage	01438 242242
Three Rivers	01923 776611
Watford	01923 226400
Welwyn & Hatfield	01707 357000

Contact the local authority to whom you pay your business rates.