

## DER Kitchen Business Start-up Primer

The following are some helpful steps to getting started a new food business in South Carolina (with the intent on join us at DER Kitchen). There are always changes so please be alert of the instructions in the following pages. Certainly, if you have any questions, please give us a call at the kitchen at 803-779-3003.

1. Start by writing a business plan. You can find templates for business plans online at various websites (eg. Small Business Administration at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)), and there are private companies that offer these services/templates. HOWEVER, I think that the public library is the best source. They have tons of books and materials about starting a business. The librarians can help with research you may need to do during the business plan process. Writing a business plan will force you to make certain decisions that will be necessary for a successful start-up as well as the registration and permitting process that you will be required to complete.
2. As you will learn while writing your business plan, there are some important people you need to meet and eventually hire. These include an attorney, an insurance agent and an accountant (or bookkeeper at a minimum). For example, one of the first things you must decide is the form of the company you are going to start. Will it be a Limited Liability Company, sole proprietorship or other form? An attorney can help you decide. Then you will need to register that company with the SC Secretary of State. This costs approximately \$125.00 to register.
3. Another first step is to visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to register the company and obtain an Employer Identification Number. Check this site for additional business forms, and tax filing information based upon the formation of the company.
4. Once you have the company EIN, you can head to the SC Business One Stop website. <https://www.scbos.sc.gov/> . I advise everyone to be patient and take your time in figuring out this website.
  - a. Register as new user.
  - b. Use the SCBOS Library tab to find the “Forms” to:
    - i. Register business with the SC Secretary of State (must decide on business formation (if not already done));
    - ii. Apply for SC Retail License. All caterers, bakers and food products sold to the public must be taxed. The submit the taxes that you collect during the sale, you will need this license.
    - iii. You can also use this site for Unemployment Insurance, pay withholding taxes and many other services.
  - c. **Again, this site takes a little time to get used to...so be patient!**
5. Open Business Checking Account and Merchant Credit Card account (if you plan on taking credit cards as payment).
6. Obtain General Liability insurance policy for Food Establishments. You will need a \$2,000,000 in coverage with DER Kitchen LLC listed as an Additional

- Insured. You or your insurance agent can either email the Proof to [der@derkitchen.com](mailto:der@derkitchen.com), [smiley@derkitchen.com](mailto:smiley@derkitchen.com) or fax to 803-779-3003.
7. If you have a food truck, cart or trailer, it is time to get in touch with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). Their website is <http://www.scdhec.gov/>. You will need to get an Application for Mobile Food Unit filled out and signed by the County Health inspector that you will find via the DHEC website.
  8. If you are a caterer, baker or food processor (ie. Makes prepared foods for sale retail like jams, sauces, etc...), and you have everything you need to start operations, then you can proceed to [www.derkitchen.com](http://www.derkitchen.com) and go to the Sign Up page to get the application. Fill that out and send it in with your application fee. In the instructions for the application, you will find a list of documents that are needed along with the application. Once all those are submitted, we will schedule a meeting at the kitchen.
  9. At the meeting, we will show you the kitchen, and discuss your plans for operations. You will need to sign a User Agreement. Then we will put your dates on the calendar and you will pay for that time in advance. Rates and other information are also available on the kitchen website.
  10. Once you are a User, we will give you a letter to the City of Columbia Business License Department. You will fill out the application at the Business License Department at 1339 Main Street on the first floor. See <http://www.columbiasc.net/businesslicenses>. You will find a guideline to obtaining a business license and the City's own *Business Startup Guide* (another good checklist to use) both at their office and at the City's website.