

Business View

Advice for your business from your council

Where to start looking for good advice

Southampton City Council is responsible for a wide range of legislation that directly impacts on businesses and we are keen to make it easier for you to contact the right person for the advice you need.

We recognise this is not always easy and are continually working on ways to improve, so in this issue of Business View we will provide you with useful sources of practical advice and show you how to get the most from your contacts within the council.

There are already a number of very useful websites, as well as the council's own, which may be able to help.

Advice for new businesses

If you are new in business, perhaps with an idea that you think might work or starting out on your own, then Business Link is a good first point of call.

Their advisors can help you with planning your business, access to grants, information on taxes and so on.



Once you have decided what you are going to do then you need to think about the legislation that controls that activity. This is where websites such as ERWIN and Business Link become useful, as you can easily see the framework of legal requirements you need to meet.

Make sense of the detail

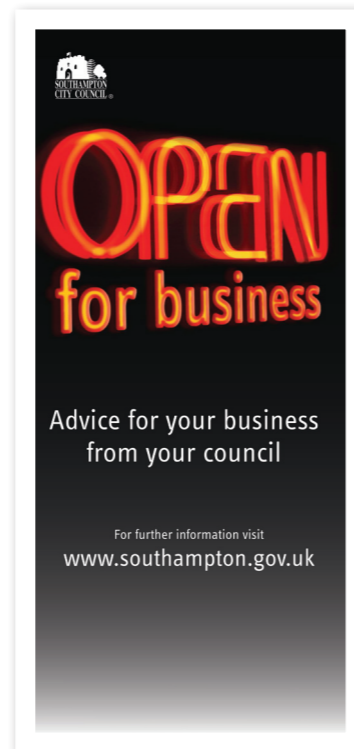
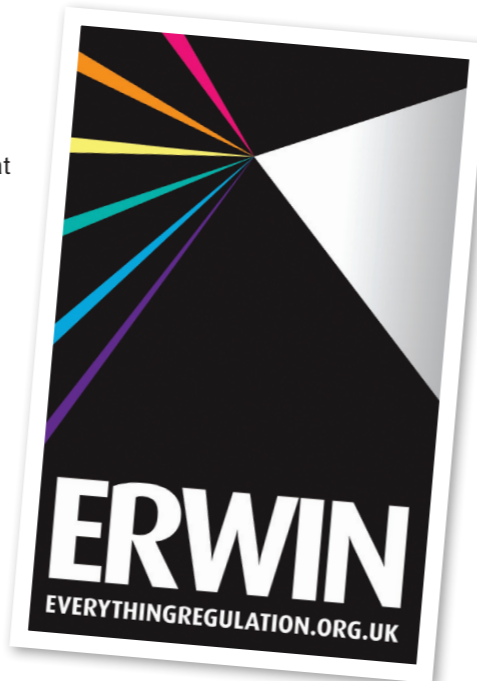
This is where talking to council's staff is essential. We can give you free advice on what the law says but perhaps more importantly, what - in practical terms - you have to do.

We can help with setting up procedures to ensure you get it right every time and identify areas of high risk - those parts of your business that can cause physical harm, injury or financial loss to you or your customers if things were to go wrong.

When to talk to us

To make the most of the advice available it is useful for you to have a fairly detailed idea of what you want to do and a clear understanding of the products and services you are selling. This will help us identify the best people to give you the advice you need and to help make your business a success.

If you ask too late you may be committed to a product or service which is going to be difficult or unlawful to supply. Talk to us too early and things can be too vague to give meaningful answers.



Advice online

The following sites should help you get a good basic understanding and provide ideas about any further questions you may need to ask.

ERWIN (Everything Regulation When Its Needed) is a site that currently holds trading standards information but will be extended to include environmental health and licensing advice. The information is searchable by business sector and then prioritised by risk.

Business Link provides information, advice and support you need on tax, vat, employment legislation, starting or growing a business and much more.

Food Standards Agency (FSA) provides information relating to food safety and food labelling.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) covers issues around the health and safety of employees and the public. Essential information for all businesses.

DirectGov provides access to planning, employment, benefits and environment issues amongst others.

Southampton City Council our own website has specific business pages, that are continuously being developed to create a comprehensive index of available sources of advice and information.

Contacts

- ERWIN www.everythingregulation.org.uk
- Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast
- Food Standards Agency www.food.gov.uk
- Health & Safety Executive www.hse.gov.uk
- DirectGov www.direct.gov.uk
- Southampton City Council www.southampton.gov.uk

Is your business prepared for a flood?

Cast your mind back to June and July in 2007 and you will probably remember the damage and heartache caused by flooding. Flooding represents the biggest natural threat in the UK, with a major flood occurring at least once a year since 1998.

Every business has a fire plan, yet it is more likely that your business will be affected by flooding and you don't have to be next to a river to be affected. Heavy rainfall can cause dangerous surface water run-off and a blocked sewer is all it takes to create serious flooding.

Flooding can spell disaster for your business. As well as damage to premises or equipment, you may also lose stock and supplies. You might find that you're unable to trade while the damage is repaired, which means your contracts could be lost and customers may go elsewhere. It is also worthwhile noting that a quarter of all small businesses affected by flooding do not re-open, which is why it is especially important for these businesses to prepare for this in advance:

Take action today:

1. Assess the risk of flooding
2. Draw up a flood plan
3. Insure your business against flooding
4. Reduce potential flood damage
5. Train employees to deal with flooding

Southampton City Council, Business Link and the Environment Agency can help you create a flood plan and help you to prepare for emergencies. Visit the websites below or telephone us for further information:

- Southampton City Council ☎ 023 8083 3002
www.southampton.gov.uk/business
- Business Link ☎ 0845 600 9 006
www.businesslink.gov.uk
- Environment Agency ☎ 0870 8 506 506
www.environment-agency.gov.uk



Free impartial advice
for start-up or established businesses

It's easier with Business Link

0845 600 9 006 www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast

