

Convenience or general store

Business start-up guide

Convenience and general store industry overview

Convenience and general store operators retail a wide range of items to the public including cigarettes, beverages, confectionery, basic groceries, magazines and general merchandise.

Starting or buying a convenience or general store involves many essential steps. Legally, you must ensure that you apply for and receive the correct licences.

This guide explains how to start a convenience or general store in Queensland. It will help you understand the challenges and opportunities of entering the convenience and general store industry so you can make good business decisions.

Getting into the convenience and general store industry

Before you start a convenience or general store, you need to understand how the industry works, what things you need to consider in your planning and the legal requirements you must meet.

Finding a competitive edge in Queensland's convenience and general store industry

In Queensland, convenience and general store operators face strong competition from supermarkets that continue to widen their product range, charge competitive prices and extend their opening hours. Takeaway and fast food retailers also compete with convenience stores over snack food customers.

To give your business a competitive edge, carefully consider the location of your business. Will your location be easy to access by foot and by car? Also, see when your local competitors are open and, if you

can, open earlier or stay open later than their hours to attract customers.

It may not be possible to compete with larger supermarket chains on price. However, being a smaller business, you can provide faster and better customer service to build loyalty and find repeat business.

You can also research your local competitors and stock products that are not available in other stores to compete.

Key success factors for convenience and general stores

To start a successful convenience or general store, you need to:

- effectively manage your stock
- find the best price for your products
- adapt to changing customer demands
- present your products attractively
- hire skilled and friendly staff
- be convenient (location, opening hours etc.).

Convenience and general store industry entry barriers

The main barrier to entering the convenience store industry is the money needed to lease store premises and buy products to sell.

If you have enough money, then starting a new convenience or general store business is easy. Merchandise is available from a range of suppliers so you can select the exact product mix to offer your customers. Council planning and building permits are also easy to get and there are many skilled staff you can employ and train.

(Source IBISWorld, March 2012)

Convenience and general store industry requirements

You may need to meet a number of licensing and registration regulations depending on your convenience or general store business operations.

Selling hazardous substances or dangerous goods

To sell hazardous substances or dangerous goods you may need an Off-site Plan from the [Department of Community Safety](#). There is no fee but it can take the Department of Community Safety up to 2 months to process your application.

Operating a crane or hoist to lift products

To operate a crane or hoist you may need a Certificate to Work in a Prescribed Occupation – Crane or Hoist Operator's Certificate from Workplace Health and Safety. Certificates cost about \$77 per occupation.

Selling fuel to your customers

To sell fuel to your customers, you may need:

- **Environmentally Relevant Activity Licence** from [your local council](#). Licence costs vary and it can take the council up to 4 weeks to process your application.
- **Flammable and Combustible Storage Licence** from [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#). Licence costs vary and it can take the council up to 4 weeks to process your application. The licence remains in effect for 12 months and can be transferred.

Operating a food business

To serve food to customers, you may need a Food Business Licence from [your local council](#). Licence costs vary depending on your business operations. All food businesses are required to have a food safety supervisor.

Having customers dine on the footpath

To serve food to customers on the footpath, you may need an Outdoor Dining Permit from [your local council](#). Permit costs vary depending on your business operation and it can take the council 4 weeks to process your application. Some councils do not regulate outdoor dining so check with your local council. **Note:** some councils require a Footpath Usage/Obstruction Permit instead of an Outdoor Dining Permit.

Selling poisons by retail

To sell poisons by retail to your customers, you may need a General Licence to Sell Poisons from [Queensland Health](#). The initial application cost is \$265 and it can take Queensland Health up to 4 weeks to process your application. Poisons include cough medicines, pain relief tablets and other items that consumers can buy from a pharmacy without a prescription or intervention by a pharmacist. **Note:** your business must not operate within 25km of the nearest pharmacy.

Selling tobacco products

To sell tobacco products, you need to be aware of the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998*, which is managed by [Queensland Health](#). It is illegal to supply tobacco products to children up to the age of 18 years and no exceptions will be made for any business that does so. Any business that helps supply tobacco products to the public must display a prohibition sign near each tobacco product point-of-sale and make sure the sign is easily visible to the public.

Legislation that may apply to your business

- *Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989*
- *Duties Act 2001*
- *Food Act 2006*
- *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000*
- Health (Drugs and Poison) Regulation 1996
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Lotteries Act 1997*
- *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998*
- Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Regulation 2010
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

To access to full copies of legislation visit www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Useful industry contacts

Business Support Unit

For more information on licences, regulations, market research, business planning and other support services phone 13 25 23 or visit business.qld.gov.au

Australasian Association of Convenience Stores Incorporated

Phone 1300 737 227

Visit www.aacs.org.au

