

Frequently Asked Questions: Laundry Licenses

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I. LAUNDRY LICENSING LAW

When did the laundry license categories go into effect?

New York City's current laundry license categories went into effect on January 30, 2017. The three license categories are:

1. Industrial Laundry
2. Industrial Laundry Delivery
3. Retail Laundry

What are the differences across the three laundry license categories?

You must have an [Industrial Laundry License](#) if your business is located in NYC and:

- provides laundry services to commercial clients, including but not limited to hotels, hospitals, restaurants, gyms, and retail laundries; and/or
- maintains or operates a laundry services facility in connection with any commercial institution, including a hotel, restaurant, or gym.

The following do *not* need an Industrial Laundry License:

- laundry facilities of any hospital; and/or
- laundry facilities of any residence for use exclusively by the owners, tenants, or occupants of the residence.

Note: If you operate a hotel and have questions about whether you must apply for an Industrial Laundry License, please review the information for hotels on Page 2.

You must have an [Industrial Laundry Delivery License](#) if your business transports laundry from:

- a commercial client within NYC to an industrial laundry within or outside NYC for laundry services; OR
- a commercial client outside NYC to an industrial laundry within NYC for laundry services; OR
- an industrial laundry within NYC to a commercial client within or outside NYC after laundry services have been performed; OR
- an industrial laundry outside NYC to a commercial client within NYC after laundry services have been performed.

Note: If your industrial laundry is located outside of NYC, but you provide delivery service in NYC, you must hold the Industrial Laundry Delivery License. You do not need the Industrial Laundry License.

You must have a [Retail Laundry License](#) if your business is located in NYC and:

- provides laundry services to the general public;
- stores or collects laundry for laundry services for the general public;
- stores or collects laundry for delivery for the general public; and/or
- offers self-service laundry machinery for direct use by the general public.

The following do *not* need a Retail Laundry License:

- laundry facilities of any hospital; and/or
- laundry facilities of any residence for use exclusively by the owners, tenants, or occupants of the residence.

Which activities qualify as laundry services?

“Laundry services” means washing, drying, starching, or ironing laundry for a fee. Laundry services also includes services provided with or incidentally to the rental of clothing, apparel, or other fabrics.

Dry cleaning services are *not* considered “laundry services” under NYC’s Laundry Licensing Law.

Are hotels that launder their own towels and linens required to have an Industrial Laundry License?

Hotels that wash, dry, starch, and/or iron their laundry (such as the hotel’s own bed linens and/or towels) and do not charge a separate fee for this service *are not required* to obtain an Industrial Laundry License. However, hotels that offer laundry services for a fee (such as providing coin-operated machines for hotel guest use or offering to launder guests’ clothing for a fee) *are required* to obtain an Industrial Laundry License.

If the hotel only offers dry cleaning services to guests, the hotel does not need an Industrial Laundry License.

If the hotel contracts with another business to wash, dry, starch, or iron guests’ laundry, the contracted business must be licensed.

If my business qualifies for an Industrial Laundry License and plans to offer delivery services, are we also required to submit a separate application for an Industrial Laundry Delivery License?

No. Your business may submit an application for an Industrial Laundry License and fill out the relevant questions in Part IV of the [Industrial Laundry Self-Certification](#) to indicate that the business will also provide Industrial Laundry Delivery services.

What if I decide to offer delivery services after I apply for and obtain an Industrial Laundry License?

If you decide to offer delivery services to or from commercial clients after you apply for and obtain an Industrial Laundry License, you must get authorization from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and obtain an amended Industrial Laundry License before engaging in the activity. If you engage in unauthorized Industrial Laundry Delivery activity, you may be subject to civil penalties and other sanctions for unlawful activity. To avoid additional processing time to amend a license, DCA encourages Industrial Laundry License applicants to indicate delivery services, or plans to engage in delivery services, when you submit your application.

Important:

If your business provides Retail Laundry services, in addition to dry cleaning services, then your business must obtain a Retail Laundry License.

II. SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Which license category should I apply for if my business delivers laundry to commercial clients in NYC, but performs the actual laundering outside of the NYC area?

Businesses that perform Industrial Laundry services at locations outside of NYC but transport laundry to or from commercial clients within NYC should obtain an Industrial Laundry Delivery License.

How do I apply for one of the laundry licenses?

A list of the application requirements and copies of the necessary forms are available at nyc.gov/dca.

You can submit a complete license application to DCA in ONE of the following ways:

- In person at one of the addresses below.
- Online via nyc.gov/dca using a laptop or desktop computer only.

DCA Licensing Center

42 Broadway, Lobby
New York, NY 10004

*Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday, and from 8:30 a.m. to
5:00 p.m. on Wednesday.*

NYC Small Business Support Center

90-27 Sutphin Boulevard, 4th Floor
Jamaica, NY 11435

*Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday.*

Am I required to submit a Certificate of Occupancy, Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, or Letter of No Objection from the Department of Buildings (DOB) with my application?

No.

III. BUSINESSES OPERATING AT MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Does a business need to obtain separate licenses if it performs laundry services at more than one location?

Yes. A license is valid only for the location specified on the license. Please submit a separate application for each location performing laundry services. The type of license each location applies for should be based on the services that particular location provides.

If my business has employees who work at more than one location, do I need to provide their information on each license application?

Yes. Where requested, the business must report the number and requested identifying information for all of the employees who work at a given location, even if one or more of those employees only works part time or also works at another location.

If my business uses the same vehicles or carts at more than one business location, what information must be included in the relevant labels?

The business should post the required information (such as licensee's name, address, and license number) for each licensee that will be using the vehicle or cart.

IV. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Does every handcart or pushcart require a label or tag that displays the licensee’s name, address, and license number?

No. Carts that are used exclusively within the premises of a retail laundry by customers moving their laundry between machines or to a folding table do not need labels or tags. Any other carts used in retail laundries, specifically those that leave the retail laundry’s premises, need labels or tags. All carts used by an industrial laundry, including carts that are used exclusively on the premises, must have labels or tags that display the licensee’s name, address, and DCA license number.

The law requires that I state the consumer’s name and home address on every document that contains charges to the consumer, including receipts. What if customers refuse to provide their full name or address?

If customers refuse to provide their full name and home address, the business must record customers’ refusal in writing on the document at the time refusal is made. This written record must be made available for inspection by DCA.

Are laundry licensees required to post their prices?

Yes. Laundry licensees must post a clearly visible price list where orders are placed or payments are made by customers. The letters must be at least 1 inch in height. The price list must show:

- list of services offered;
- minimum price charged for each service; and
- any factors that may cause the price to be higher than the minimum price.
 - For each factor, the business must disclose the additional price or range of additional prices for each service. Some examples of factors that may increase prices include clothes with embellishments or special materials.
 - If a minimum weight is required, the price list must include the price for that minimum weight and the additional price or range of additional prices for weights above the minimum weight.

Retail laundries that offer self-service laundry machines to the public must post a sign informing customers where to make complaints and request refunds. What must the complaint/refund sign say?

The sign must state:

“All complaints and claims for refunds can be made to the attendant or, if an attendant is not present, to _____.”

The letters on the sign must be at least 2 inches in height. The business must fill in the blank space (above) with the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) to whom complaints and claims for refunds must be made.

The business must post the sign where it is clearly visible to customers.

If your business receives a first-time violation for not complying with this rule, you may be eligible to cure or correct the first-time violation without paying a penalty. Information about curable violations is available on the DCA website nyc.gov/dca.

Can laundries charge different prices for men and women for the same services?

No. Businesses cannot charge men and women different prices for the same service.

Prices for services cannot be based on gender, although price lists may include other cost differences. For example, a price list sign with different prices for laundering “shirts” and “blouses” is not permitted *unless*

there is some difference in labor or materials required to launder shirts or blouses that justifies a variation in prices.

V. DRY CLEANERS

Do I need any of the laundry licenses if I exclusively provide dry cleaning services?

No. You do not need a laundry license to perform dry cleaning services. If you have questions about regulations for dry cleaners, please contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

However, if you will store or collect laundry for laundry services for the general public, then you must have a Retail Laundry License.

If my business performs wash and fold services for a dry cleaner, what kind of license do I need?

You will need an Industrial Laundry License because you perform laundry services for another business (i.e., commercial client).

VI. OTHER INQUIRIES

How can I prepare for DCA inspections and avoid violations?

Read [Inspection Checklist: Laundry Services](#), available at nyc.gov/dca.

I have a legal question about the Laundry Licensing Law. Where should I direct my question?

You can direct any legal questions to DCA's Business Compliance Counsel at 212-436-0436 or BCC@dca.nyc.gov.