STAYING LEGAL: ONGOING FILINGS AND DEADLINES

The yearly and recurring filings, renewals and records that keep your business in good standing.

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AT A GLANCE

- Starting a business is one set of paperwork. **Keeping it in good standing** is an ongoing set.
- Common recurring items: **state annual reports, license and permit renewals, tax filings, insurance renewals and payroll reports**.
- Put every deadline on one **compliance calendar**. See **O-13 Compliance Calendar**.

WATCH OUT

Requirements differ by state, city, industry and country. Use this as a starting list, and confirm yours with your state, city and a professional.

Why it matters

Missing a filing can cost late fees, lead to your business being dissolved by the state, void your licenses or insurance, and cause problems with lenders and investors who check that you're in good standing.

Common recurring items

Item	How often	Who it's with
Annual or biennial report	Yearly or every two years	Your state
Registered agent	Ongoing; keep it current	Your state
Business license renewal	Often yearly	City or county
Professional and trade license renewals	Varies	State licensing boards
Health, fire and other permits	Often yearly, plus inspections	County and city
Federal and state income tax returns	Yearly	IRS and state. See **B-14 Business Taxes: What You Owe and When**.
Estimated tax payments	Quarterly	IRS and state
Sales tax returns	Monthly, quarterly or yearly	State
Payroll tax deposits and reports	Varies; reports often quarterly	IRS and state
W-2s and 1099s	Each January	Employees, contractors, IRS
Insurance renewals	Yearly	Your insurer
Lease renewals and options	As set in your lease	Landlord
Trademark maintenance	Set years after registration	USPTO
Owner and board decisions	As needed	Your records

Good habits

1. **Make one compliance calendar** with every due date and reminders 30 days ahead. See **O-13 Compliance Calendar**.
2. **Keep a "company records" folder** with formation papers, licenses, insurance, contracts and filings.
3. **Record big decisions** in writing, signed by owners, especially for corporations and multi-member LLCs.
4. **Update the state** when your address, managers or agent change.
5. **Review once a year** with your accountant or lawyer.

> EXAMPLE
>
> **Joseph** missed his LLC's annual report while busy opening a second bay. Months later, a lender found his LLC listed as "inactive" with the state. He had to pay late fees and file to reinstate it, which delayed his loan by six weeks. Now every deadline lives on a shared calendar with two reminders.

Common mistakes

- **Assuming your accountant handles everything.** Ask exactly what they cover.
- **Ignoring mail from state agencies.**
- **Letting licenses lapse.**
- **No written records of major decisions.**

Your checklist

- ☐ List every recurring filing and renewal
- ☐ Add them all to a compliance calendar (O-13)
- ☐ Set reminders 30 days ahead
- ☐ Create a company records folder
- ☐ Confirm with your accountant what they handle

Where to go next

- **O-13 Compliance Calendar**
- **B-14 Business Taxes: What You Owe and When**
- **B-05 Licenses and Permits: Finding What You Need**

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