

License FAQs

Q: What is an Activity License?

A: An Activity License (also known as a Commercial Activity License or CAL) is needed to conduct business within Philadelphia, including businesses that are located outside the city limits but do some or all of their business activity in the city. It was formerly known as the Business Privilege License. Before applying for any additional business licenses in the City of Philadelphia, you will need an Activity License. There are three types of Activity Licenses:

- Commercial
- Non-Profit
- 2-4 Unit Owner-Occupied Housing

Q: What is BIRT?

A: It's the Business Income & Receipts Tax (BIRT) account. Every individual, partnership, association, limited liability company (LLC), and corporation engaged in a business, profession, or other activity for profit within the city of Philadelphia must file a BIRT return. This account and number can be obtained from the Department of Revenue.

Q: What should I do if I receive the following error message: *“Your account has been flagged for inaccurate information on file or tax compliance reasons.”*?

A: Visit <https://secure.phila.gov/revenue/TaxCompliance/> to obtain a tax compliance memo.

- If your account is in compliance, call 311 or 215-686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online request to <https://www.phila.gov/311/form>.
- If your account is not in compliance, contact the Department of Revenue at 215-686-6565 or taxclearance@phila.gov to get the next steps to compliance.

Q: How do I get a copy of my license?

A: Renewed rental licenses are available for immediate download. For license types that require documents to be reviewed, please allow two business days for review. You will receive an email notification once your application has been reviewed.

Q: What should I do if I receive the following error message when trying to associate my Activity License: *“No Activity License was found that matches your criteria OR you are trying to relate a license that you are already associated with.”*?

A: Go to your eCLIPSE homepage and scroll to the bottom of the page.

- If your Activity License is listed under the “MY ACTIVITY LICENSES” header, proceed with the renewal.
- If the Activity License is not listed, verify that the CAL, BIRT, and EIN or SSN are correct. For additional assistance, call 311 or 215-686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online request to <https://www.phila.gov/311/form>.