Starting-out compliance checklist for a trades business

Education only, not business or legal advice: the licences, workers' compensation registration and business registration the official pages mention, as a list to check with each authority.

NAME

DATE

TRADE

PROVINCE OR TERRITORY

LICENSING BODY

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

CHECK WITH EACH AUTHORITY

- [ ] Contractor or trade licence the province requires for work for hire (electrical, gas, home building)
- [ ] Workers' compensation registration as an employer, if the board requires it
- [ ] Business registration with the government
- [ ] Liability insurance the licensing body asks for
- [ ] Permits for each job, where the municipality requires them

This is a checklist of questions, not advice. The licensing body, the workers' compensation board and the government decide what applies to you.

SOURCES (CHECKED 2026-11-27)

The Electrical Safety Authority says that in Ontario only electrical contractors licensed by ESA may do electrical work for hire. A licensed electrical contractor must be a Master Electrician or have one working for it at all times, carry at least $2,000,000 of liability insurance, and be registered with the WSIB if the law requires it. https://esasafe.com/contractors/licensed-electrical-contractor/get-your-licence/ (checked 2026-11-27)
Technical Safety BC says that to perform regulated electrical work in B.C. you must be licensed by Technical Safety BC, be employed by a licensed electrical contractor, or be authorized to do the work yourself; a licensed electrical contractor designates a Field Safety Representative. https://www.technicalsafetybc.ca/technologies/electrical/electrical-licences (checked 2026-11-27)
BC Housing says a residential builder (anyone who engages in, arranges for or manages all or substantially all of the construction of a new home, including developers and general contractors) must get a licence from BC Housing before starting construction and arrange home warranty insurance. https://www.bchousing.org/licensing-consumer-services/builder-licensing/become-licensed-residential-builder (checked 2026-11-27)
Canada.ca says you may have to register with the government before you start operating a business, and that you will need to know where your main office will be, which other provinces or territories you plan to operate in, your proposed business name and your business type (a corporation, or a sole proprietorship or partnership). https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/start/register-with-gov.html (checked 2026-11-27)