START A BUSINESS - HAWAII

How to open an auto repair shop in Hawaii

Hawaii repair and body shops need a Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Board repair dealer license for each facility, with at least one licensed mechanic; repair labor is subject to general excise tax.

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1 Is a repair shop right for you?

Repair shops diagnose and fix vehicles, from maintenance and brakes to engines and collision repair. It suits experienced technicians who price fairly and keep good records.

2 Form the business and get a GET license

1. Choose a structure. Register your business with the DCCA Business Registration Division.
2. Get a general excise tax (GET) license from the Department of Taxation. GET applies to the gross income of virtually all business activity, services included.
3. Check your city or county for local licenses and zoning.

3 Repair dealer license

Repairing vehicles for compensation requires a motor vehicle repair dealer license from the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Board for each repair facility. The dealer must be a licensed mechanic or employ at least one, and licenses renew every two years ($288).

4 Work orders and salvage rebuilds

Work orders must state the repairs requested and the odometer reading, and customers get a copy of anything they sign. Rebuilding salvage vehicles needs a separate salvage repair dealer license.

5 General excise tax on repairs

Hawaii's general excise tax applies to the gross income of virtually all business activity, services included, so repair labor and parts are both taxable income. The tax is on you as the business, and you may pass it on; the rate is 4 percent for most activities plus any county surcharge.

6 A/C work

Servicing vehicle air conditioning for pay requires EPA Section 609 certification.

7 Your first steps

1. Register the business and get a GET license.
2. Hire or be a licensed mechanic.
3. Apply to the Board for a repair dealer license for each facility.
4. List your business on Nearby Car Care

Requirements at a glance

General excise tax on repairs

Required - State - Hawaii Department of Taxation

Hawaii's general excise tax applies to the gross income of virtually all business activity, including services, so repair labor and parts are both part of your taxable gross income. The tax is on you as the business, and you may pass it on to customers. The rate is 4 percent for most activities plus any county surcharge.

Motor vehicle repair dealer license

Required - State - Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Board

Repairing vehicles for compensation in Hawaii requires a motor vehicle repair dealer license from the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Board for each repair facility. The dealer must be a licensed motor vehicle mechanic or employ at least one. Licenses renew every two years ($288 for repair dealers). Rebuilding salvage vehicles needs a salvage repair dealer license.

Fees: $288 renewal every two years

Official application: https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/motorrepair/

EPA Section 609 certification for air conditioning work

Required in some cases - Federal - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Anyone who repairs or services a motor vehicle air conditioning system for payment or bartering must be certified by an EPA-approved Section 609 program.

Official agencies and links

Section 609 Technician Training and Certification Programs

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

https://www.epa.gov/mvac/section-609-technician-training-and-certification-programs

Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Board

Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Professional and Vocational Licensing

https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/motorrepair/

General Excise Tax (GET) Information

Hawaii Department of Taxation

https://tax.hawaii.gov/geninfo/get/

Frequently asked questions

Do Hawaii repair shops need a license?

Yes. A motor vehicle repair dealer license for each facility, with at least one licensed mechanic.

This guide is general information, not legal advice. Rules change and can depend on your city or county, so confirm with the official agencies linked below before you apply.

https://nearbycarcare.com/resources/business/open-auto-repair-shop/hawaii/