START A BUSINESS - WASHINGTON

How to start an auto detailing business in Washington

Washington treats washing and cleaning vehicles as retail sales, so collect retail sales tax on the full charge; we found no state detailing license.

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1 Is detailing right for you?

Detailers clean and protect vehicles inside and out. It suits careful, patient people and can start small with a mobile setup.

2 Form the business and register for sales tax

1. Choose a structure. LLCs and corporations file with the Washington Secretary of State.
2. Get a business license through the Department of Revenue's Business Licensing Service, collect retail sales tax and report B&O tax. Vehicle repairs are taxable, labor included.
3. Check your city or county for local licenses and zoning.

3 Licenses

We found no Washington State license for detailing or car washes. Check your city or county for licenses and zoning.

4 Retail sales tax

Washing and cleaning vehicles for consumers is a retail sale: collect retail sales tax on the total charge. B&O tax also applies.

5 Your first steps

1. Form the business and register with the Department of Revenue.
2. Check local licenses and zoning.
3. Buy insurance and equipment.
4. List your business on Nearby Car Care

Requirements at a glance

Retail sales tax on washing and detailing

Required - State - Washington State Department of Revenue

Cleaning and washing vehicles for consumers is a retail sale: collect retail sales tax on the total charge. We found no Washington State license for detailing.

Official agencies and links

WAC 458-20-173, Installing, repairing, cleaning, altering or improving tangible perso

Washington State Department of Revenue (Washington State Legislature)

https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=458-20-173

Frequently asked questions

Is detailing taxable in Washington?

Yes. Washing and cleaning vehicles for consumers is a retail sale, taxed on the total charge.

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/start-auto-detailing-business/washington/