START A BUSINESS - CONNECTICUT

How to start a roadside assistance company in Connecticut

Know which roadside jobs need a DMV repairer license, when lockouts need locksmith registration, the auto club license for memberships, and the towing rules if you tow.

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1 Is roadside assistance right for you?

Roadside companies help stranded drivers with jump starts, tire changes, fuel delivery, lockouts and winch-outs. It suits people who like driving and stay calm next to traffic.

2 Form the business and get a sales tax permit

1. Choose a structure. LLCs file a Certificate of Organization with the Secretary of the State ($120). If you use a name different from the owners' names, file a trade name certificate with the town clerk; the DMV asks for it.
2. Get a Sales and Use Tax Permit from the Department of Revenue Services ($100). It is valid for two years and renews automatically when your returns are filed. The general rate is 6.35%.

3 Which jobs need a repairer license

Connecticut does not treat changing tires, installing batteries, bulbs, wiper blades or drive belts, or adding fluids as repairing, so those jobs do not need a DMV repairer license. Actual repairs for consumers do, and the license requires an approved facility and a $25,000 bond.

4 Lockouts and memberships

Locksmiths register with the Department of Consumer Protection ($200 application). Employees of towing services and of auto clubs who open car locks in the normal course of business are exempt, as long as they do not advertise as locksmiths. If you sell roadside memberships to the public, you need a DMV auto club license.

5 Sales tax and towing

Towing and road services are taxable in Connecticut at 6.35%. If you tow, you must hold a dealer or repairer license and register each wrecker; see our Connecticut towing guide.

6 Your first steps

1. Form the business and get your sales tax permit.
2. Decide which services you will offer and check the license each needs.
3. Buy commercial auto and liability insurance.
4. List your business on Nearby Car Care

Requirements at a glance

Form the business and file a trade name certificate if needed

Required - State - Connecticut Secretary of the State; your town clerk

LLCs file a Certificate of Organization with the Secretary of the State (corporations file their own formation documents there). A business using a name different from its owners' names files a trade name certificate with the town clerk, which the DMV asks for on license applications.

Fees: LLC Certificate of Organization: $120.
Official application: https://business.ct.gov/knowledge-base/articles/domestic-limited-liability-companies-forms-and-fees

Sales and Use Tax Permit

Required - State - Connecticut Department of Revenue Services

Register with the Department of Revenue Services for a Sales and Use Tax Permit before you make taxable sales. The general rate is 6.35%. Permits are valid for two years and renew automatically if your returns are filed. The DMV asks dealers, repairers and recyclers for a copy of the permit.
Fees: $100 application fee. Doing business without a permit: $250 penalty for the first day and $100 for each following day.

Collect sales tax on towing and road services

Required - State - Connecticut Department of Revenue Services

The Department lists motor vehicle towing and road services as taxable.

Repairer license if you make repairs (battery and tire changes excluded)

Required in some cases - State - Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

Connecticut does not treat changing tires, installing batteries, bulbs, wiper blades or drive belts, or adding fluids as repairing, so those services do not need a repairer license. Repairing vehicles for consumers does. It is illegal to repair motor vehicles for consumers in Connecticut without a DMV dealer or repairer license (a class B misdemeanor). Repairers need a building that can take at least one vehicle for repairs, with an office and parts storage, at least one qualified mechanic, a certificate of approval for the location from the town's zoning official, building official and fire marshal, a waste oil tank of at least 250 gallons with a letter from a registered waste oil transporter (or an exemption), an insurance certificate (R1325e), a sales tax permit and a $25,000 surety bond.
Fees: $140 nonrefundable application fee; repairer license $340 for two years; plates $140 each plus $5 safety fee (K-36, revision 07-2026).
Official application: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMV/20/29/K36pdf.pdf

Locksmith registration for lockouts, unless an exemption applies

Required in some cases - State - Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

Locksmiths must register with the Department of Consumer Protection. Employees of towing services and employees or representatives of automobile clubs who open automotive locks in the normal course of business are exempt, but only if they do not hold themselves out to the public as locksmiths.
Fees: Locksmith registration application: $200.
Official application: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DCP/pdf/Applications_Added_2017/LCK-Application_18July.pdf

If you also tow: dealer or repairer license and wrecker registration

Required in some cases - State - Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

Only licensed dealers or repairers can register a wrecker. See our Connecticut towing guides.

Auto club license if you sell roadside memberships

Required in some cases - State - Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles

Any person or entity that offers the public a membership for a fee covering a period, for services relating to the protection and assistance of automobile owners or drivers (other than insurance), needs a DMV auto club license.

Official agencies and links

Locksmith registration application instructions
Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DCP/pdf/Applications_Added_2017/LCK-Application_18July.pdf

Get a DMV wrecker inspection
Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles
https://portal.ct.gov/dmv/vehicle-services/get-vehicle-inspection/wrecker-inspection

Get a regulated DMV business license or registration
Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles
https://portal.ct.gov/dmv/commercial-and-industry-services/get-regulated-business-license

Procedure for Obtaining a Connecticut Dealer or Repairer License (K-36)
Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, Dealers and Repairers Licensing Unit
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMV/20/29/K36pdf.pdf

Getting Started in Business (Informational Publication 2018(5))
Connecticut Department of Revenue Services
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DRS/Publications/pubsip/2018/IP-2018(5).pdf

Services Subject to Sales and Use Taxes
Connecticut Department of Revenue Services
https://portal.ct.gov/DRS/Sales-Tax/Services-Subject-to-Sales-and-Use-Taxes

Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 246, section 14-51 (definitions)
Connecticut General Assembly
https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_246.htm

Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 400p, Locksmiths
Connecticut General Assembly
https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_400p.htm

Domestic Limited Liability Company forms and fees
Connecticut Secretary of the State (Business One Stop)
https://business.ct.gov/knowledge-base/articles/domestic-limited-liability-companies-forms-and-fees

Frequently asked questions

Do I need a license for roadside assistance in Connecticut?
Tire changes, jump starts with battery installs, and fluid top-ups are not repairs under state law. Repairs need a DMV repairer license, lockouts may need locksmith registration, and towing needs a wrecker registration through a dealer or repairer license.

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-roadside-assistance-company/connecticut/