START A BUSINESS - IOWA

How to start a vehicle wrap and graphics business in Iowa

Form the business and register for sales tax; ask how installation is taxed, and know the USDOT marking rules your fleet customers rely on.

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1 Is a wrap business right for you?

Wrap shops design, print and install vinyl wraps, fleet graphics, lettering and USDOT numbers. It suits detail-oriented people with design or installation skills.

2 Form the business and register for sales tax

1. Choose a structure. LLCs and corporations file with the Iowa Secretary of State.
2. Get a sales tax permit from the Department of Revenue. Iowa taxes listed services, including vehicle repair, wash and wax, and towing.
3. Check your city or county for local licenses and zoning.

3 Licenses

We found no Iowa State license for wrap installation. Check your city or county for licenses and zoning.

4 Sales tax

Materials are taxable. Ask the Department of Revenue how your installation charges are treated.

5 Marking rules your customers rely on

Vehicles that need a USDOT number show the carrier name and USDOT number on both sides, readable from 50 feet.

6 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

Iowa sales tax permit

Required - State - Iowa Department of Revenue

Register with the Department of Revenue for a sales tax permit. Iowa taxes listed services, including vehicle repair, motor repair, vehicle wash and wax, and wrecker and towing, plus any local option tax.

Form your LLC or corporation with the Iowa Secretary of State first. Fees not verified here.

Official application:
https://revenue.iowa.gov/taxes/tax-guidance/sales-use-excise-tax/iowa-sales-and-use-tax-taxable-services

Sales tax on wraps; ask about installation

Required - State - Iowa Department of Revenue

Wrap materials are taxable, and painting is a taxable service. Ask the Department how your installation charges are treated.

USDOT number marking on commercial motor vehicles

Required in some cases - Federal - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Vehicles that need a USDOT number show the carrier's name and USDOT number on both sides, readable from 50 feet in daylight (49 CFR 390.21).

Official agencies and links

49 CFR 390.21, Marking of self-propelled CMVs and intermodal equipment

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (eCFR)

https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-390/subpart-B/section-390.21

Iowa Sales and Use Tax: Taxable Services

Iowa Department of Revenue

https://revenue.iowa.gov/taxes/tax-guidance/sales-use-excise-tax/iowa-sales-and-use-tax-taxable-services

Frequently asked questions

Do wrap installers need a license in Iowa?

We found no state 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.