LICENSES, PERMITS & CERTIFICATIONS - CALIFORNIA

California auto detailing licenses and requirements

What California requires of these businesses: registration, tax, licenses and the official links to check.

Sources verified 2026-11-21 - Updated 2026-11-21

1 The rules at a glance

- CDTFA seller's permit (labor generally not taxed)
- Labor Commissioner car wash registration (yearly)
- $150,000 surety bond
- Local business license and wash water rules

Requirements at a glance

Sales tax on products; ask about services

Required - State - California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

Products you sell are taxable. Ask CDTFA how your washing and detailing charges are treated.

Labor Commissioner car wash registration and $150,000 bond

Required in some cases - State - California Labor Commissioner (Division of Labor Standards Enforcement

Car washing and polishing employers register with the Labor Commissioner every year, with proof of local business licensing and a surety bond of at least $150,000. Self-service and automated washes whose employees only handle cashiering or maintenance are excluded.

Amount: $150,000 bond

Official application: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB&sectionNum=2055

Official agencies and links

Publication 25, Auto Repair Garages and Service Stations (June 2026)

California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

https://cdtfa.ca.gov/formspubs/pub25.pdf

Labor Code 2054 and 2055, Car wash registration

California Legislature

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB&sectionNum=2055

Frequently asked questions

Do California car washes need to register?

Yes. Car washing and polishing employers register with the Labor Commissioner yearly with a $150,000 bond.

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/licenses/auto-detailing-licenses-permits/california/