LICENSES, PERMITS & CERTIFICATIONS - DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DC auto detailing licenses and requirements

What DC 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

- DC sales tax registration and Clean Hands (repairs taxable, labor included)
- Sales tax on washing and detailing
- Ask DLCP about the auto repair license for cleaning

Requirements at a glance

Sales tax on car washing and detailing

Required - State - DC Office of Tax and Revenue

Charges for car washing, including cleaning, washing, waxing, polishing or detailing a vehicle, are taxable, except coin-operated self-service car washes.

DLCP Consumer Goods (Auto Repair) license for vehicle cleaning

Required in some cases - State - DC Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection

DLCP's Consumer Goods (Auto Repair) category includes cleaning and finishing of vehicles; ask DLCP whether your detailing business needs it and its bond.

Official application: https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1618741

Official agencies and links

D.C. Code 47-2001, Sales tax definitions (retail sales of services)
Council of the District of Columbia
https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/47-2001

Consumer Goods (Auto Repair) business license
DC Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection
https://dlcp.dc.gov/node/1618741

Frequently asked questions

Is detailing taxable in DC?

Yes. Car washing, waxing, polishing and detailing are taxable, except coin-operated self-service washes.

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.