

New business setup checklist: your first 90 days

The paperwork, tax choices and money habits to get right from day one

WEEK 1

Paperwork

- ☐ **Get your EIN** directly from irs.gov. It's free. Never pay a website to get one.
- ☐ **Sign an operating agreement**, even if you're the only owner.
- ☐ **Open a business bank account and card** and keep personal spending off them.
- ☐ **Keep a registered agent on file** with your state, and update it if it changes. **Example:** NC requires one for every LLC.
- ☐ **Save one folder** with your articles of organization, EIN letter and operating agreement.
- ☐ **BOI report:** US companies no longer file FinCEN beneficial ownership reports (exempt since March 2025). Confirm at fincen.gov/boi.

MONTH 2

Accounting habits

- ☐ **Business card for business only.** Mixed spending is the hardest thing to untangle later.
- ☐ **Reconcile monthly:** match your records to every bank and card statement.
- ☐ **Keep receipts** as you go. A photo saved with the transaction works.
- ☐ **Mileage log:** date, miles and business purpose for each trip, written down when it happens.
- ☐ **Collect a W-9** before you pay any contractor.
- ☐ **Pay yourself on purpose:** owner draws for a regular LLC, a payroll salary if you elect S corp.

MONTH 1

How you're taxed

- ☐ **One owner:** by default the IRS disregards the LLC, and profit goes on your personal return (Schedule C).
- ☐ **Two or more owners:** taxed as a partnership by default, with its own return (Form 1065).
- ☐ **Self-employment tax** (15.3% for Social Security and Medicare) generally applies to that profit, on top of income tax.
- ☐ **S corp election (Form 2553)** can make sense once profit is steady. It adds payroll and a separate return.
- ☐ **Form 2553 timing:** file within 2 months and 15 days after the start of the tax year it takes effect, or any time in the year before.
- ☐ **Plan for estimated taxes** if you expect to owe \$1,000 or more when you file.

MONTH 3

Your yearly calendar

- ☐ **Estimated taxes:** April 15, June 15, September 15 and January 15.
- ☐ **January 31:** Form 1099-NEC to each contractor paid \$2,000 or more, and to the IRS.
- ☐ **March 15:** partnership and S corp returns. A filing extension moves them to September 15.
- ☐ **April 15:** your personal return with Schedule C. A filing extension moves it to October 15, but tax is still due April 15.
- ☐ **State annual report. Example:** NC LLCs file by April 15 every year after the year they formed.
- ☐ **Weekend or holiday?** The deadline moves to the next business day.

Good to know: Dates assume a calendar tax year. Your state may have its own registrations, taxes and deadlines on top of these, so check with your state before you file.

Questions?

Book a free discovery call: nxtlevelcpa.com

[Or book online directly.](#)