Business Domain Checklist

What to check before and after registering your business domain

Choosing

- [ ] I know the exact business or brand name I want customers to remember.
- [ ] I know whether my audience is mainly Canadian, global, or both.
- [ ] I've considered where the business may expand in the next 3 to 5 years.
- [ ] The domain is easy to say, spell, and type, without explaining hyphens or numbers.
- [ ] I'm not choosing a keyword-heavy domain purely because I expect an SEO boost.

Availability & brand checks

- [ ] I checked both the .ca and the .com.
- [ ] I looked at what currently exists on any taken matching domain.
- [ ] I searched the brand name on Google and checked for confusingly similar businesses.
- [ ] I searched the Canadian Trademarks Database.
- [ ] I checked the social handles that actually matter to this business.
- [ ] I'll get legal or trademark advice if a material conflict appears.

.CA eligibility

- [ ] If registering a .ca, I've verified I meet a CIRA Canadian Presence Requirement category.
- [ ] I understand the CPR category can affect how WHOIS privacy is handled.

Registrar

- [ ] The registrar is CIRA-certified for .ca, or appropriately ICANN-accredited or connected for a gTLD.
- [ ] I know the first-year price and the renewal price.
- [ ] I know the transfer, restoration, and privacy terms.
- [ ] MFA, registrar lock, and DNSSEC are supported.
- [ ] Support and account recovery look acceptable.

Ownership

- [ ] The registrar account is controlled by the business, not solely by a developer or agency.
- [ ] The intended registrant is correctly listed.
- [ ] The recovery email is controlled by the business and doesn't depend on the domain itself.
- [ ] Registration records and invoices are saved.

Security

- [ ] Strong, unique password in place.
- [ ] MFA enabled.
- [ ] Registrar lock enabled.
- [ ] Auto-renew enabled with a valid payment method.
- [ ] Expiry date recorded independently, outside the registrar account.

Website & email setup

- [ ] Correct A/AAAA/CNAME records point to the right host.
- [ ] Correct MX records are set for email.
- [ ] SPF, DKIM, and DMARC are configured from the email provider's instructions.
- [ ] A primary www or non-www version is chosen, with the other redirecting to it.

Ongoing

- [ ] Registrar contact and payment information is current.
- [ ] The domain is reviewed at least once a year.
- [ ] Unsolicited renewal or transfer emails are verified inside the registrar account before any action is taken.

This checklist is educational, not legal advice. Rules vary by registry, registrar, and jurisdiction. See vortio.com/resources/business-domain-guide for the full guide and sources.