Christmas Light Installation Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Price per linear foot of roofline, with add-ons for trees and bushes
- Full service (leased lights, takedown, storage) leads to yearly rebooking
- Book clients in September and October, before the rush
- Ladder safety and liability insurance come first

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Ladder and roof work is the main risk, so carry general liability insurance and follow ladder safety rules. Use outdoor-rated lights, cords and timers, and never overload circuits. Some areas require a licensed electrician for new outlets or hard-wired work, so stick to plug-in installs. Put takedown dates and storage terms in a written agreement.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Extension and step ladders, plus ladder stabilizers
- [ ] Roof-safe light clips for gutters and shingles
- [ ] Outdoor-rated commercial LED light strands (C9 and mini lights)
- [ ] Outdoor extension cords, timers and outlet covers
- [ ] Fall-protection gear for roof work and non-slip boots
- [ ] Labeled bins for storing each customer's lights

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time

- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge
- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Start booking in September and October; calendars fill fast
- [ ] Offer your lawn, window or pressure washing clients a holiday package
- [ ] Post photos and short videos of lit homes in neighborhood groups
- [ ] Pitch businesses and HOAs for entrance and storefront displays
- [ ] Offer an early-booking discount and rebook every customer at takedown
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.