Lawn Care Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start with mowing, edging and blowing: the recurring core of lawn care
- Check your state's pesticide applicator license before offering fertilizer or weed control
- Price per visit by lawn size and drive time, and sell seasonal contracts
- Group clients by neighborhood to earn more per hour

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
- [ ] Commercial auto insurance matters if you drive a truck and trailer for work; personal auto policies often exclude business use. If you'll apply fertilizer or herbicides, check your state's applicator licensing rules.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Commercial or heavy-duty push mower (upgrade to a zero-turn later)
- [ ] String trimmer and edger
- [ ] Backpack or handheld blower
- [ ] Truck or vehicle plus a trailer
- [ ] Gas cans, spare blades and a sharpening kit
- [ ] Safety glasses, ear protection and gloves

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

- [ ] Door hangers in neighborhoods with big lawns and older homeowners
- [ ] Google Business Profile with before/after photos
- [ ] Ask each client to introduce you to neighbors ("we're on your street every Tuesday")
- [ ] Reach out to small HOAs, churches and offices for commercial mowing
- [ ] Yard signs on client lawns (with permission)
- [ ] 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