

# Starting a Self-Storage Business

Use this checklist to track your progress from first research to opening day. It follows the same structure as our complete guide and covers the decisions, documents, and actions many first-time operators might overlook.

## 1. General Requirements

- Mapped all self-storage facilities in the area and identified potential competitors within a 20-minute drive of your facility
- Verified catchment population (rule of thumb: minimum 15,000 inhabitants)
- Reviewed competitor unit mix and street-rate pricing
- Assessed local demographic profile (household size, share of renters, SME density)
- Modelled a lease-up timeline and occupancy ramp

## 2. Business Model & Legal Structure

- Decided on ownership model: own, lease, or management contract
- If leasing: negotiated the longest defensible term and had it reviewed by local counsel
- Selected a legal entity appropriate to your jurisdiction
- Checked VAT treatment for self-storage rental in your country
- Decided whether to register for VAT early (to reclaim input VAT on fit-out)
- Arranged insurance for both the building and tenant goods
- Drafted a tenancy agreement reviewed by a local solicitor
- Confirmed data protection compliance for tenant information (GDPR)

## 3. Location & Property

- Confirmed visibility from a main road
- Verified ceiling height (suitable for mezzanines or tall units)
- Checked floor load capacity
- Assessed column grid against your partitioning plan
- Confirmed power capacity (especially if offering climate control)
- Confirmed zoning and change-of-use permission (or initiated application)

## 4. Funding & Financing

- Determined total capital requirement (fit-out, tech, legal, working capital)
- Secured equity commitment
- Explored senior debt options (bank, development finance programs)
- Modelled working capital needed to cover the ramp-up period before stabilisation
- Considered phased fit-out to let early cashflow fund later tranches
- Stress-tested projections at 60%, 75%, and 85% occupancy

## 5. Facility Design & Partitioning

- Unit mix finalised and weighted toward smaller sizes
- Corridor widths sufficient for trolley use
- Lighting and ventilation specified
- CCTV sightlines designed into layout (not added retrospectively)
- Fire compliance reviewed with a specialist
- Signage and wayfinding included in fit-out scope
- Phased expansion space identified and reserved

## 6. Technology & Access Control

- Booking engine selected
- Payment processor selected
- Property management system selected
- Access control system selected
- Video surveillance system selected
- Considered remote monitoring for proactive security
- Confirmed all systems integrate with each other to automate workflows
- Tested end-to-end: online booking → automatic unit access, no manual steps required

## 7. Marketing & Tenant Acquisition

- Business name chosen and domain secured
- Website built (mobile-first, prices displayed, direct booking enabled)
- Google Business Profile created and verified
- Local SEO basics in place (location pages, relevant keywords)
- Paid search campaign set up with a tight geographic radius
- Referral or launch promotion planned
- Branded identity decided: named corridors, themed unit IDs, or other differentiator
- Photos and video of the facility ready for website and ads

## 8. Operations

- SOPs written for move-in, move-out, late payment, and security incidents
- Automated billing and dunning configured and tested
- Overlock process confirmed between PMS and access control
- Accounting setup connected to payment provider
- Customer communication templates written (booking, access details, payment reminders)
- Walk-in and phone inquiry flow tested (what happens when someone arrives on site?)

## 9. Opening Day

- All systems live and tested end-to-end
- Insurance confirmed active
- First bookings taken (pre-launch if possible)
- Staff or remote monitoring coverage confirmed
- Emergency contact and escalation process in place
- Google Business Profile updated with opening hours and photos

### We're here to help

We've worked with operators and investors across Europe grow a storage business from scratch with a digital-first strategy in mind. Reach out to us at any time, we're happy to apply our years of knowledge to your project.

[www.sensorberg.com](http://www.sensorberg.com)

