

HOME OCCUPATION: Definition and Standards

The term “Home Occupation” is defined in Section 2.10.030 of the county zoning ordinance as: “Businesses conducted incidental to the residential use of a property, generally within a dwelling by resident occupants.”

Home occupations are subject to the provisions of Section 4.10.180 of the zoning ordinance. They are allowed as a matter of right on any residentially developed property within the county’s unincorporated areas. There are no “home occupation” permits required for such uses. In addition, the county does not have a business license procedure, so unincorporated residents do not need (nor can they get) a business license for a home occupation. However, depending on the nature of the business, other local, state or federal regulations and/or permits may apply.

A. General Home Occupations

The following criteria shall apply to all General Home Occupations:

1. The use shall be clearly incidental and subordinate to the residential use of the property and shall not change the character thereof;
2. The use shall be conducted within the dwelling by resident occupants. No nonresident employees shall be allowed;
3. The use shall not create additional pedestrian, automobile or truck traffic in excess of the normal amount typical for the area. Client or customer visits to the site shall normally be limited to not more than three (3) per day, and 10 per week;
4. No activity shall be allowed that creates offensive noise, dust, smoke, odor, vibrations, glare, or radio or television interference that is noticeable from beyond the property boundaries;
5. No hazardous materials other than those commonly found within a residence shall be used or stored on the site. Such materials and equipment shall be limited to quantities that do not constitute a fire, health or safety hazard;
6. Not more than one (1) truck or van, whose capacity shall not exceed one (1) ton, shall be used in any manner with the home occupation. Vehicles should not contain display advertising;
7. One (1) non-illuminated sign not exceeding one (1) square foot in area may be appropriately placed to identify the home occupation; and
8. Uses which include the following shall not be allowed as home occupations: on-site automotive repair or service (includes any mechanism containing an internal combustion engine); food preparation; medical services; painting of vehicles, trailers, boats or machinery; massage; pest control; veterinary services; or any use which violates any applicable law.

Any person who desires an official written determination as to whether or not a particular use constitutes a general home occupation may request an interpretation by the zoning administrator. Such interpretation shall require completing a home occupation questionnaire, and submitting such questionnaire to the planning office along with a filing fee.

On lots one acre or larger, an “Expanded Home Occupation” may be allowed subject to a Special Permit, and the specific criteria of Section 4.10.180.

B. Expanded Home Occupations

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The following criteria shall apply to all Expanded Home Occupations:

1. The minimum lot size shall be one (1) acre, gross;
2. The use shall be clearly incidental and subordinate to the residential and (if applicable) agricultural use of the property and shall not change the character thereof;
3. The use shall be conducted within the dwelling or accessory building by resident inhabitants, and may include one (1) nonresident (up to full-time) employee;
4. Accessory buildings containing expanded home occupation uses shall be limited in area to not more than 1,200 square feet (total). A larger building may be used provided the home occupation area is structurally partitioned to not exceed 1,200 square feet;
5. Storage of equipment and materials outside of buildings shall be limited to a specified area not exceeding 600 square feet, and shall be appropriately screened to be not visible from outside the property boundaries. Equipment and materials shall be limited to quantities that do not constitute a fire, health or safety hazard;
5. The use shall not create additional pedestrian, automobile or truck traffic in excess of normal amount typical for the area. Client or customer visits to the site shall normally be limited to not more than three (3) per day, and 10 per week;
6. No activity shall be allowed that creates offensive noise, dust, smoke, odor, vibrations, glare, or radio or television interference that is noticeable from beyond the property boundaries;
7. Not more than two (2) trucks or vans, whose capacity shall not exceed one (1) ton per vehicle, shall be used in any manner with the home occupation use. Vehicles should not contain display advertising that exceeds the limitations of criterion 9 below;
8. One (1) non-illuminated sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in area may be appropriately placed to identify the business, but should not be intended as an advertising display to attract customers. Such a sign shall not be located within the required front yard setback, nor within any street right-of-way. There shall be no display of products visible from outside the property boundaries;
9. Uses which are expressly prohibited or uses which may be authorized subject to discretionary land use approval by other provisions of this zoning ordinance shall not be authorized as expanded home occupations; and
10. Uses which include the following shall not be allowed as expanded home occupations: on-site automotive repair or service (includes any mechanism containing an internal combustion engine); food preparation; massage; medical services; painting of vehicles, trailers, boats or machinery; pest control; veterinary services; or any use which violates any applicable law.