

Home Occupation

PJR-048

PURPOSE:

This handout summarizes the regulations of the Sonoma County zoning ordinance for home occupations. A home occupation is a small-scale business conducted out of a private residence or residential accessory structure. Home occupations must be secondary to the residential use of the site, and must meet certain standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding residential uses. Home occupations differ from live/work uses in that they do not permit any non-resident employees, and are more limited in the type of uses permitted and the number of visitors allowed. A home business which does not meet one or more of the standards below may still be allowed with a use permit as a live/work use.

Home occupations may be conducted in homes in agricultural and residential zoning districts (LIA, LEA, DA, RRD, RRDWA, AR, RR, R1, R2 and R3), the Planned Community zoning district (PC), and commercial zoning districts that permit residential uses (CO, C1, C2, C3, LC, RC, AS, and K). Home occupations that comply with the standards and regulations of the code are considered to remain a Group R, Division 3 Occupancy (per California Building Code) if they take place within a single family dwelling, guest house or other habitable structure and a Group U Occupancy (per California Building Code) if they take place within a residential garage, residential storage building or other non-habitable structure. A zoning permit is required for all home occupations. Each applicant must sign a home occupation affidavit which is an acknowledgment agreeing to comply with the home occupation standards.

PROCEDURE:

The applicant submits a complete home occupation zoning permit application to a planner at the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) zoning cubicle. The planner verifies that the proposed home occupation will comply with all applicable standards and requirements (see [Sonoma County Code Section 26-88-121](#)). The applicant must agree to comply by signing the attached Home Occupation Affidavit. A copy of the approved Zoning Permit and Home Occupation Affidavit will be provided to the applicant.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS:

A complete application is required and must include all of the following:

1. Zoning permit application ([PJR-004](#)) signed by all property owners.
2. An 8 ½" x 11" site plan, drawn to scale, that clearly identifies all structures on the property, the home or accessory structure where the home occupation will be conducted. The access to the subject property (public road, private road, driveway) shall also be shown on the site plan for reference.
3. An 8 ½" x 11" floor plan, drawn to scale, that identifies the room or area devoted to the home occupation.
4. A brief proposal statement that summarizes the proposed home occupation. The proposal statement should also reference how the proposed home occupation will be consistent with the Home Occupation Standards.
5. A signed Home Occupation Affidavit (attached).
6. Filing fee - see the current PRMD Project Review Fee Schedule.

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

2550 Ventura Avenue ❖ Santa Rosa, CA ❖ 95403-2829 ❖ (707) 565-1900 ❖ Fax (707) 565-1103

HOME OCCUPATION DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

1. The home occupation shall be conducted entirely within one (1) of the following:
 - a. A portion of the dwelling which does not exceed more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total floor area of the dwelling;
 - b. A garage or portion thereof, (up to a maximum of five hundred (500) square feet) which does not displace any required parking;
 - c. A detached accessory structure or portion thereof (up to a maximum of five hundred (500) square feet).
2. Employees. No person shall be employed in the home occupation other than residents of the dwelling.
3. Hours of Operation. Customer visits and deliveries shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and shall not occur on state and federal holidays.
4. Number of Home Occupation Activities. No more than one (1) home occupation is allowed per legal dwelling unit on the property.
5. Visits and Deliveries. Not more than four (4) customers or clients shall be allowed to visit the dwelling for any service or product during any one (1) day, nor more than two (2) customers or clients at any one (1) time. Not more than a total of ten (10) deliveries and/or pickups of materials, goods, supplies or products are allowed in any one (1) week.
6. Commercial Vehicles. No more than one (1) single one (1) -ton or smaller commercial vehicle related to the business use shall be kept at the dwelling site.
7. Outdoor Storage/Activity. No outdoor storage of materials or equipment related to the home occupation shall be permitted. No outdoor activity related to the home occupation shall be permitted.
8. Offsite Effects. No home occupation activity shall result in offsite dust, electrical interference, fumes, gas, glare, light, noise, odor, smoke, toxic/hazardous materials, vibration, or other hazards or nuisances as determined by the director.
9. Noise. Noise levels generated by a home occupation shall meet the requirements of the noise element of the general plan.
10. Safety. Activities conducted and equipment or material used shall not change the fire safety or occupancy classifications of the premises.
11. Technical codes. A home occupation shall comply with all of the codes adopted by reference at [Sonoma County Code](#) Section 7-13 (including the Uniform Building Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, National Electrical Code, Uniform Fire Code, and Uniform Mechanical Code) and shall require building, septic division and other clearances as determined necessary by the director.
12. Utilities. The home occupation shall not require any utility services modification, other than a modification required for normal residential use, that would be classed as commercial or industrial in load or design, and in no event shall electrical current to the home residence or home occupation exceed two hundred twenty (220) volts.
13. Exterior appearance. The home occupation shall not require any change of the residential character or the outside appearance of the dwelling, either by the use of colors, materials, lighting, noise, or signs other than signage permitted by this section.

14. Parking Requirements. Home occupations shall comply with the parking standards set forth in Section 26-88-010(g). The decision maker may modify this requirement to decrease or increase the required parking as appropriate to allow for the reuse of existing structures with limited parking, so long as adequate on-site parking for clients is demolished.
15. Signs. A home occupation shall be limited to one (1) attached, non-illuminated, two (2) square-foot sign.

NOTE: If a proposed home occupation meets all the Design and Development Standards above, no building modifications are required to meet California Building Code requirements related to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and no change of occupancy classification is required.

ALLOWED USES:

1. Art and craft work such as ceramics, painting, photography, sculpture, woodwork, and similar cottage industries that do not involve reportable or regulated quantities of hazardous or flammable substances, where such operations will not generate noise, dust, or odors.
2. Office-only uses by architects, attorneys, consultants, writers and owners of electronic commerce businesses, and similar uses.
3. One-on-one services such as music, art, and dance lessons, tutors, licensed counseling and massage therapy.
4. Tailoring and sewing.
5. Other home occupation uses which in the opinion of the planning director are of a similar and compatible nature to those uses described above.

PROHIBITED USES:

1. Adult entertainment activities/businesses;
2. Animal hospitals and clinics; pet care services such as grooming, doggie day cares or kennels of any size;
3. Automotive and other vehicle repair, services, painting, storage, or upholstery, or the repair of engines, including automobiles, boats, motorcycles, trucks, or recreational vehicles;
4. Boatmaking;
5. Commercial cabinet or furniture making, furniture refinishing/antique restoration and sales;
6. Dismantling, junk, scrap, or storage yards;
7. Food processing, canning, baking, etc., including catering, or motorized mobile food vendors such as coffee carts or taco trucks;
8. Gun and weapon sales;
9. Hair salons, day spas, and other uses which generate higher water and sewer demands, and higher customer visits;
10. Uses which involve medical procedures;
11. Uses that require the handling of any hazardous (including biologically hazardous) or toxic

materials, substances or wastes (as defined by California or federal law), except for small, nonreportable or unregulated quantities that are used in woodworking, painting, or photography, or in the making of jewelry, ceramics, pottery, and sculpture;

12. Uses that require explosives or highly combustible materials;
13. Uses that may trigger building modifications to meet California Building Code requirements related to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) or such that a change of occupancy classification is required. Such uses may be approved with a Use Permit as Live/Work Uses ([PJR-053](#)).
14. Welding, machine shop operations, or metal fabricating;
15. Other uses that the director determines to be similar in impact to those listed above.



COUNTY OF SONOMA

PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 565-1900 FAX (707) 565-1103

HOME OCCUPATION AFFIDAVIT

Name

Site Address

Mailing Address

City/Town

City/Town

State/Zip

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)

Phone

Fax

File Number

Signature

Date

This is to acknowledge that I, _____, in applying for a home occupation permit pursuant to Section 26-88-121 of the Sonoma County Code, do hereby agree to abide by and conform to the Home Occupation Development Standards and Operating Requirements set forth in 26-88-121 and all other provisions of the Sonoma County Code pertaining to the conduct of home occupations, a copy of which has been supplied to me. I hereby also acknowledge that the approval of this home occupation permit shall in no way permit any activity contrary to the Sonoma County Code, or any activity which would constitute a nuisance under state or local law. I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility, as property owner and/or applicant, to ensure that the conduct of this home occupation is not contrary to any covenant, code or restriction which may govern the property on which the home occupation will be conducted, which property address is referenced above.