

Live/Work Uses

PJR-053

PURPOSE: This handout summarizes the regulations and required application materials of the Sonoma County Zoning Code for live/work uses.

A live/work use is a business conducted within a dwelling unit or accessory structure by occupants of the dwelling unit and up to two employees. All business activities must be subordinate to the residential use of the site. A live/work use is distinguished from a home occupation primarily in that a live/work use can include employees who are not residents of the home, involve a greater number of customers, be located in a larger percentage of a home or accessory building, and can operate beyond the days and hours prescribed for home occupations. The application process includes notification of neighbors who have an opportunity to comment on the proposed live/work project. All live/work uses shall be conducted in accordance with Section 26-88-122 of the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance.

Live/work uses 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). The live/work use must be conducted within one of the following structures: (1) a portion of a dwelling not exceeding more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total floor area of the dwelling, (2) a garage or portion thereof which does not displace any required parking, or (3) a detached accessory structure or portion thereof. A use permit is required for each live/work use proposal. Each applicant must sign a live/work affidavit which is an acknowledgment agreeing to comply with the live/work standards. Live/work uses are not permitted in Mixed Use projects or Single Room Occupancy units, or caretaker units.

PROCEDURE: The applicant submits a complete Use Permit application to a planner at the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) zoning cubicle. The application will be assigned to a Project Planner in the Project Review Division of PRMD. If the Project Planner determines that proposed live/work use is consistent with the provisions of Section 26-88-122 of the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance, PRMD will notify property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. For some uses that clearly meet all criteria, a hearing waiver may be used.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS:

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

1. Planning application form PJR-001, signed by all property owners.
2. Proposal statement. This should be a one or two page letter fully describing the current use of the property and how you propose to change it. This should include information regarding the kind of use, the structures proposed, magnitude or size of the use, the intensity of the use, and the frequency of the use. Discuss changes in noise, traffic, and site appearance that will result from the proposal, quantified where possible. Indicate any planned future use beyond the present proposal.
3. Site Plan. An 8 ½" x 11" site plan, drawn to scale, that clearly identifies all structures on the property and the home or accessory structure where the live/work use will be conducted. The access to the subject property (public road, private road, driveway) shall also be shown on the site plan for reference. Site plans must include, at a minimum, the information required on the Minimum Standard Site Plan, Form CSS-019.
4. An 8 ½" x 11" floor plan, drawn to scale, that identifies the room or area devoted to the live/work use.
5. A signed live/work affidavit (attached).

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6. Filing fee - see the current PRMD Project Review Fee Schedule.

LIVE/WORK STANDARDS:

- Employees:** Up to two (2) persons other than residents of the dwelling may be employed, unless otherwise provided by use permit.
- Location:** No more than 25% of the area of the home, or a garage (or portion thereof) that does not displace any required parking, or a detached accessory structure.
- 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, unless otherwise provided by use permit, and shall not occur on state and federal holidays.
- Number of Live/Work Activities:** No more than one (1) live/work use is allowed per legal dwelling unit on the property.
- Visits and Deliveries:** Not more than eight (8) customers or clients shall be allowed to visit the dwelling for any service or product during any one (1) day, nor more than four (4) customers or clients at any one (1) time. Not more than a total of ten (10) deliveries and/or pick ups of materials, goods, supplies, or products are allowed in any one (1) week unless otherwise authorized by use permit.
- Commercial Vehicles:** No more than one (1) single one (1) ton or smaller commercial vehicle related to the business activity shall be kept at the dwelling site.
- Outdoor Storage/Activity:** No outdoor storage of materials or equipment related to the business activity shall be permitted. No outdoor activity related to the business activity shall be permitted.
- Offsite Effects:** No live/work use activity shall result in offsite dust, electrical interference, fumes, gas, glare, light, noise, odor, smoke, toxic/hazardous materials, vibration, or other hazardous or nuisances as determined by the director.
- Noise:** Noise generated by live/work uses shall be consistent with the noise element of the general plan.
- Safety:** Activities conducted and equipment or material used shall not change the fire safety or occupancy classifications of the premises.

Allowed Uses:

1. Art and craft work such as ceramics, painting, photography, sculpture, woodwork, and similar cottage industries that may involve minor use of hazardous or flammable substances as allowed by the department of emergency services; or operations which generate noise, dust, or odors provided that they are determined to be compatible with the surrounding land uses;
2. Office uses by architects, attorneys, consultants, writers and owners of electronic commerce businesses, and similar uses;

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3. One-on-one and group services such as music, art, and dance lessons, tutors, licensed counseling and massage therapy, etc.;
4. Tailoring and sewing;
5. Limited, brief, pet care services such as grooming (but not doggie day cares or kennels) located outside of urban service areas;
6. Furniture refinishing/antique restoration;
7. Hair salons, day spas and other uses which generate higher water and sewer demands, and higher customer visits;
8. Uses that may trigger building modifications to meet California Building Code requirements related to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) such that a change of occupancy classification is required;
9. Other live/work uses which in the opinion of the 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;
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. Boat making;
5. Commercial cabinet or furniture making;
6. Mobile food vendors such as coffee carts, or taco trucks;
7. Gun and weapons sales;
8. Uses which involve medical procedures;
9. 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, non-reportable or unregulated quantities that are used in woodworking, painting, or photography, or in the making of jewelry, ceramics, pottery, and sculpture;
10. Uses that require explosives or highly combustible materials;
11. Welding, machine shop operations, or metal fabricating (except for artisan metal sculpture); and
12. Other uses that the Director of PRMD determines to be similar in character to those listed above.

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COUNTY OF SONOMA
PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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

LIVE/WORK AFFIDAVIT

Name	Site Address
Mailing Address	City/Town
City/Town	Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
Phone	File Number
Signature	
Date	

This is to acknowledge that I, _____, in applying for a live/work use permit pursuant to Section 26-88-122 of the Sonoma County Code, do hereby agree to abide by and conform to the Live/Work Development Standards and Operating Requirements set forth in 26-88-122 and all other provisions of the Sonoma County Code pertaining to the conduct of live/work uses, a copy of which has been supplied to me. I hereby also acknowledge that the approval of this live/work 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 live/work use is not contrary to any covenant, code or restriction which may govern the property on which the live/work use will be conducted, which property address is referenced above.