



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Home Occupations Code Section 13.10.613

What is a Home Occupation?

In residentially-zoned areas, limited, income-producing activities may be conducted if they are not harmful to the neighborhood and do not create a parking problem. These include activities such as:

- music lessons
- small appliance repair
- hairdressing
- tax preparing
- catalog or internet ordering
- other similar occupation

Are Permits Required?

With a few minor exceptions, a building permit is required for any new construction. For home occupations that may have an impact on the neighborhood, a Level 5 Development Permit, issued by the Zoning Administrator after a public hearing, is also required.

For More Information: This brochure summarizes the rules about home occupations. For complete regulations, see the Santa Cruz County Code, Section 13.10.613.

If you have questions about home occupations, please call the [Zoning Information](#) phone line or consult the Zoning Counter during [walk-in hours](#).

When is No Development Permit Required?

1. The home occupation shall be carried on entirely within the dwelling, or in an accessory structure normally allowed in the zone district in which the site is located.
2. When only one client, student or customer will be present at any time.
3. When the home occupation will be carried on only by full-time residents of the dwelling.
4. When there will be no employees or staff other than the full time resident of the dwelling.
5. When only one room and less than 1/5 of the floor area is used.
6. When there is no outdoor storage or activity.
7. When all retail goods are produced or assembled on the premises, or will be ordered by mail.
8. When only one vehicle not larger than 3/4-ton pickup truck is used.
9. When no motor larger than 1/2 horsepower is used.
10. When no hazardous materials are used.

When is a Development Permit Required for a Home Occupation?

1. The home occupation shall be carried on entirely within the dwelling, or in an accessory structure normally allowed in the zone district in which the site is located.
2. When more than one client, student or customer will be present.

(continued)

3. When there will be employees working or parking at the residence (i.e. workers other than the resident). Even with a permit, the number of non-resident employees may not exceed five.
4. When more than one room of the house, or more than 1/5 of the floor area of the house is used.
5. When there is outdoor storage or activity. (It must be screened from the street and adjoining properties. All noise must be contained within the site boundaries.)
6. When retail goods are sold which were not produced or assembled on the premises, unless the sales are by mail order.
7. When a vehicle larger than 3/4 ton, or more than one truck of any size, is used.
8. When heavy-duty equipment of more than 1/2 horsepower is used.
9. When it involves the handling of hazardous materials, or of any amount of an acutely hazardous substance.

How to Apply for a Level 5 Development Permit for a Home Occupation

Visit the Zoning Counter in the Planning Dept during their regular hours. Meet with a Planner and they will provide you with a Home Occupation application packet that lists the required submittal materials, the fees and how many sets of plans need to be submitted. You will need an appointment to submit the application and all required materials, and pay the appropriate fee. As part of your application submittal, describe the proposed activity/operations, including:

- Business description-activities taking place
- Hours and days of operation
- Maximum number of employees, students, and clients expected
- Number and type of equipment, vehicles and supplies to be used
- Delivery schedule – address the number of vehicles coming and going from the site, frequency, hours and days.
- The property owners's signature will be required, if they are not present. The owner-agent form for this purpose is in the Home Occupation application packet.

For a description of the permit procedure, see the brochure [Zoning Administrator Development Permits](#).

Off-Street Parking

In addition to the two or more spaces required for the dwelling, you must provide one space for each vehicle involved in the home occupation. This includes clients', students', customers' and employees' cars as well as trucks and delivery vehicles.

Signs

One unlighted sign not larger than one square foot may be attached to the house or the building where the home occupation will be conducted. If the dwelling and building are set back more than 40 feet from the front of the property line, the sign may be attached to the mailbox.

Toxic Materials

If you will be using any amount, however small, of a chemical preparation such as paint, fiberglass, solvent, resin, oil, caustic acid or gas under pressure, be sure to contact the County Hazardous Materials Program staff through [Environmental Health Services](#).