



HOME OCCUPATIONS

SECT. 13.10.613 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CODE

What is a Home Occupation?

A home occupation is an accessory use, secondary to a residential use, for income-producing activities involving the manufacture, provision or sale of goods and/or services, performed by a full-time inhabitant of the unit, that does not affect the residential character of the property or neighborhood. Commercial weddings and similar celebrations, community events and fundraisers are not eligible to be permitted as home occupations. Examples of allowed activities include:

- Music lessons / art lessons
- Appliance repair
- Hairdressing
- Tax preparing
- Catalog or Internet ordering
- Fitness trainer / yoga classes
- Cottage food businesses (permit from Environmental Health also required)
- Similar occupations



What uses CANNOT be a Home Occupation?

- Wedding venue
- Community events/fundraisers
- Commercial firewood operation –where wood is cut, processed, and/or stored for sale to the public

Are Permits Required?

Many home occupations do not require a permit. For home occupations that would impact the neighborhood, a Use Permit and public hearing are necessary.

Occasionally, home improvements are necessary to conduct the home enterprise. Most construction requires a building permit.

No use permit is required when these conditions are met:

1. The home occupation is carried on entirely within the dwelling or in an accessory structure normally allowed in the zone district.
2. For personal services, instruction or training, only 1-2 clients or students are present at one time.
3. The home occupation is carried on only by one or more full-time inhabitants of the dwelling.
4. No more than 1-2 employees or staff work at the site who are not full-time residents.
5. No more than 35 percent of the total floor area of the dwelling is used.
6. There is no outdoor storage or activity.
7. All retail goods are produced or assembled on the premises or ordered by mail.
8. Only one vehicle not larger than a ¾-ton pickup truck, in addition to other vehicles not exceeding the standard number of required parking spaces for the subject home, is used for the home occupation.
9. No hazardous materials are used.
10. Noise levels comply with the County [General Plan Noise Element](#) and SCCC 8.30 and 13.15.



When is a use permit required for a Home Occupation?

1. When the home occupation would not occur within the dwelling or within an accessory structure normally allowed within the district.
2. When services or instruction would be provided to more than two people at a time.
3. When three or more employees who are not inhabitants of the residence would be working or parking at the site. The maximum number of non-resident employees allowed with a permit is five.
4. When more than 35 percent of the total floor area of the dwelling would be used.
5. When there would be outdoor storage or activity.
6. When noise levels would travel beyond the property line and exceed maximums established by the General Plan Noise Element or SCCC 8.30 and 13.15.
7. When retail goods would be sold that were not produced or assembled on the premises unless the sales were by mail order.
8. When a vehicle larger than 3/4 ton, would be used.
9. When the number of vehicles used for the occupation would exceed the standard number of required parking spaces for the home.
10. When the home occupation involves handling of hazardous materials (SCCC 7.100.020) or any acutely hazardous substance.
11. When an illuminated sign, or sign larger than one sq.ft., would be used to indicate a home occupation.

How to Apply for a Use Permit for a Home Occupation

The first step is to discuss your enterprise with a planner, who will provide you with a home occupation application packet that lists the required submittal materials, the fees and reviewing agencies. When you have prepared all the required materials, contact the Planning Dept. by phone, email or counter appointment to submit your application. As part of your application

submittal, describe in detail the proposed activity, including:

- Business description – proposed activities
- 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 – timing and frequency
- Outdoor activities and how these would be screened from view
- Hazardous materials to be used or stored onsite.

For a description of the Level 5, public hearing permit approval process, see the brochure [Zoning Administrator Development Permits](#).

Noise

The home occupation shall not generate unacceptable levels of noise, as defined by the General Plan Noise Element, SCCC 8.30, and SCCC 13.15 Noise Planning.

Off-Street Parking

Only one vehicle, not to exceed a ¾-ton pick-up in size, may be used for the home occupation unless a Level 5 approval is received. If a ¾-ton pickup truck is used, off-street parking shall be provided for the vehicle. For home occupations with more than two employees, or providing personal services for more than two customers at a time, or on sites where the number of customers exceeds available on-site parking, additional on-site parking may be required.

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 site's structures 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, gas under pressure or any other potentially hazardous material, contact the County Hazardous Materials Program staff through [Environmental Health Services](#).