



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

Purpose

The purposes of regulations for home occupations are:

1. To allow persons to carry on limited, income-producing activities on their residential property.
2. To protect nearby residential properties from potential adverse effects of the allowed activity by not allowing home occupations that would create excessive noise, traffic, public expense or any nuisance.

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 at 831-454-2130 or consult the Zoning Counter. Click [here](#) for location and hours.

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.
3. When outside employees will be hired. (Not more than five non-residents may be employed in any case.)
4. When more than one room of the house, or more than 1/5 of the floor area 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

You will need to make an appointment to submit an application, pay the appropriate fee, and submit a description of the project. Include whatever plans are listed in the "List of Required Information" (LORI application packet), which the Zoning Counter planner will give you.

Describe your proposed activity, including:

- Hours and days of operation
- Number of employees and clients expected
- Equipment, vehicles and supplies to be used
- Delivery schedule – address vehicles coming and going from the site, frequently, hours and days.

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

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.

Restrictions on Home Occupations

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. There shall be no visible or external evidence of the home occupation other than one unlighted sign not exceeding one square foot in area, which shall be affixed to the dwelling or building in which the home occupation is conducted. If both the dwelling and the building are set back more than 40 feet from the front property line, the sign may be affixed to the mailbox. No outdoor storage, operations or activity is allowed unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained, in which case the allowed outdoor use shall be completely screened from the street and adjoining properties.
3. The home occupation shall be carried out primarily by a full-time inhabitant of the dwelling. Not more than five additional employees may also be used for a home occupation if a Level V Use Approval is obtained. (*Staff note: Level V Approval is required to have 1-5 employees.*)
4. The home occupation shall not involve the use of more than one room, or floor area equal to 20 percent of the total floor area of the dwelling, whichever is less, unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained.
5. Home occupations involving personal services (beauty shop, barber shop, massage studio, etc.) or training (swimming lessons, musical instrument lessons, band practice, yoga, or philosophy, etc.) may involve no more than one person at a time, unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained.
6. Sales of goods are allowed only if the goods to be sold are produced or assembled entirely

- on the premises, or if sales are by mail order, unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained.
7. Only one vehicle, no larger than a three-quarter ton pickup, may be used for the home occupation unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained. All deliveries and shipments of equipment, supplies, and products shall be made only with this one vehicle. An off-street parking space shall be provided for this vehicle. Additional off-street parking shall be provided for employees or customers.
 8. No equipment with a motor of more than one-half horsepower may be used unless a Level V Use Approval is obtained.
 9. All noise shall be contained within the boundaries of the site.
 10. Home occupations involving the handling of hazardous materials, as defined by Section [7.100.030](#) of this Code, or of any amount of an acutely hazardous substance, as defined by State or federal law, shall require a Level V use approval. Hazardous materials refer to materials defined in Chapter 7.100 of this Code.

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](#).