
City of Sonoma

Planning, Building and Public Works
No. 1 the Plaza
Sonoma, CA 95476



What you should know about: **Home Occupations**

Phone: (707) 938-3743 Fax: (707) 938-8775 E-mail: cityhall@sonomacity.org Web: www.sonomacity.org

Definition: A “Home Occupation” is defined as the conduct of a business within a dwelling unit or residential site, employing occupants of the dwelling, with the business activity subordinate to the residential use of the property.

Required Planning Approvals: The establishment or expansion of a home occupation requires the issuance of a Home Occupation permit by the Planning Division. Home Occupation permits are issued over the counter, upon verification that all applicable requirements will be met. They are not normally subject to review by the Planning Commission; however, if the City Planner finds that, due to the nature or intensity of the proposed use, it is not clear whether the requirements can be met, the application may be referred to the Planning Commission in which case it would be evaluated through use permit review.

Other Permits/Special Fees: A business license is required for all businesses in Sonoma, including home occupations. Business licenses are obtained from the City of Sonoma Finance Department and must be renewed annually. Home occupations that involve the use of alcoholic beverages (e.g., a wine brokerage) must obtain an appropriate license from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

Special Regulations: Pursuant to the City of Sonoma Zoning Ordinance, home occupations are subject to the following requirements and restrictions:

- ◆ *The home occupation shall only be performed or operated within the confines of the residence. Access to the space devoted to the home occupation shall be from within the residence.*
- ◆ *On-site employees, other than those living in the residence, are prohibited.*
- ◆ *The home occupation shall not result in the installation of equipment or facilities not normally incidental to a residential use.*
- ◆ *There shall be no visible evidence of the home occupation from the exterior of the residence, nor any impairment of the residential appearance of the interior area where the home occupation is conducted.*
- ◆ *There shall be no advertising of the home occupation visible from the exterior of the residence or on any vehicle associated with the residence.*
- ◆ *The home occupation shall not generate pedestrian or vehicular traffic substantially greater than that normally associated with residential uses in the area.*
- ◆ *The home occupation shall be conducted so as not to cause offensive or objectionable noise, vibration, smoke, odors, humidity, heat, cold, glare, dust, dirt or electrical disturbances perceptible to the average person at or beyond the property line of the lot containing the home occupation.*
- ◆ *A business license is required.*

The following uses are excluded as home occupations: introductory services, teaching of classes totaling more than six students at one time, storage or construction yards, the care, treatment or boarding of animals.
