

Home Occupations

WHAT IS A HOME OCCUPATION?

Home occupations are businesses that are based within a residence, such as a home office. The business owner both resides and operates a business within the same building or dwelling. These are typically small-scale businesses that don't have a lot of customer traffic. Home Occupations are not required to be brought up to the same building code occupancy standards as other commercial or mixed-use buildings, since the building will remain primarily a residence. This can be an inexpensive option for small business owners living and operating from home.

The standards listed below have been established to ensure that the outside appearance of a dwelling and residential property is not significantly altered to fit business needs and that business operations do not disturb the neighborhood with unusual noise, odor, or traffic.

HOME OCCUPATION STANDARDS

1. The use of the home as a residence will remain the primary use. The home occupation will be clearly incidental and subordinate to the use of the dwelling as a residence.
2. The only people working in the home occupation will be members of family who also reside there. Non-related employees may be employed only if they work at a jobsite other than the dwelling.
3. Materials, goods, supplies or equipment used for the business are stored inside the home or accessory buildings. No outdoor display or storage of materials, goods, supplies, or equipment will be located on the property.
4. Parking of commercial vehicles (over 12,000 lbs) will be limited to one hour, unless engaged in legitimate loading or unloading activities. Blocking vehicle or pedestrian traffic on any portion of a public street, alley, or sidewalk may require additional permits. Please see Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 11 or contact Planning and Development Services for more information.
5. The outside appearance of the residence will not change and/or will not appear that it is being used for a business. The business will not generate nuisances to any greater extent than what is usually experienced in a residential neighborhood, including traffic, parking, noise, lighting, odors, fumes, hazards, and electrical interference. If the business is changed or expanded,



- contact Planning and Development Services to find out if additional permitting is required.
6. Any chemicals or materials used for the home occupation will be stored and disposed of according to the applicable health and safety regulations.
 7. A 5-pound dry chemical fire extinguisher will be centrally located within the area of the home occupation. Any additional Tacoma Fire Department requirements are met.
 8. Home occupations involved in food and beverage production or catering will obtain all required approvals from other applicable agencies, including the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.
 9. Limited on-premises sales of products or stock-in-trade may be permitted, as long as it is accessory to a service offered through the home occupation. For example, a home occupation engaged in hair salon services may sell hair care products or accessories. It must be clearly demonstrated that on-premises sales will be limited and consistent with the criteria set forth above.
 10. One non-illuminated nameplate sign (maximum size 1.5 square feet) may be placed flat against a dwelling containing a home occupation.

A Home Occupation License and City of Tacoma Business License are required to establish a Home Occupation.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

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STEPS TO STARTING A HOME BUSINESS

- Discuss your desired home occupation with a Planner by calling 253-591-5030 or meet in person during lobby hours.
- Obtain other applicable approvals, such as a State License or Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department approval.
- If all standards are met, sign the Home Occupation License and Conditional Home Occupation Agreement.
- Submit the Conditions, license applications, and fees for a Home Occupation License and Business license in person to the Tax and License Division, 744 Market St, Tacoma, WA 98402.

Certain types of Home Occupations such as catering/food and beverage production, dog daycares, scrap metal, vehicle repair or hulk hauling have additional conditions and applicable regulations. A **Conditional Home Occupation Agreement** for these types of uses will be attached to the Home Occupation License and lists the specific standards that the business will need to comply with so that the neighborhood is protected from any potential nuisances.



Craft Food Production

1. Contact the following agencies to confirm that requirements are met before proceeding with business operations:
 - a. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (all food/drink production)
 - b. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (coffee roasters)
 - c. Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (alcohol)
2. Washington State Licensing (all food/drink production) All operations and storage need to be contained within the residential building(s).
3. No noticeable odors from the food/beverage production emitting from the property.
4. Distilleries and marijuana production are prohibited as home occupations.

Dog Daycare

1. Limited to a capacity of 6 dogs within the dog daycare operations.



2. Must be cared for within an enclosed building.
3. No more than one dog at any one time may be allowed outdoors periodically.

Scrap Metal

1. All business operations and storage must be contained within an enclosed building that is no more than 500 square feet in size. Such building shall be in compliance with applicable building and land use regulations.
2. On-site processing of scrap metal is prohibited.

Vehicle Repair

1. Work shall be limited to Light Automotive Repair and General Engine Repair as defined in the City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services Division Policy Statement for Automobile Repair as Home Occupations, dated October 23, 2006.
2. All repair work shall be conducted within an enclosed structure.
3. Any vehicles waiting for service shall be stored in an enclosed structure

Hulk Hauler

1. No vehicles in the process of being transported shall be stored on the subject site. This includes vehicles attached to or on the vehicle transport vehicle.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Tacoma Municipal Code Section: [6 - Tax and License Code](#)

Tacoma Municipal Code Section: [13.06.100.E - Home Occupation Standards](#)



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