

HOME OCCUPATIONS

Vermont has a long tradition of residents who work from their homes as a primary or supplemental source of income. Home occupations are a balance between the right to work from home and the right of neighbors not to feel they are living next to a store or factory. For this reason, Vermont has statutory language that protects the existence of home occupations *and* authorizes municipalities to regulate home occupations to protect the character of residential neighborhoods.

The Town of Chester through its Unified Development Bylaws requires a zoning permit to conduct a home occupation, and the home occupation must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ The primary use of the premises is as a private residence.
- ✓ The occupation is customary in residential areas and does not have an undue adverse effect on the character of the neighborhood.
- ✓ The occupation is carried on in a minor portion of the residence or in an accessory building.
- ✓ There are no disturbances such as noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odors, heat, glare, and electrical interference or line voltage variations.
- ✓ On-street parking is prohibited.
- ✓ The exterior of the building may not be altered to take on a commercial aspect.
- ✓ The home occupation may have one sign not to exceed 6 square feet approved through a separate **sign permit**.
- ✓ The occupation shall be carried on by persons residing on the premises. The use of on-site employees who do not reside on the premises will require a separate **home business permit**.
- ✓ Exterior displays and exterior storage of materials is prohibited for a home occupation but may be allowed through a separate **home business permit**.

While Chester has required a zoning permit for home occupations for many years, few home occupation owners know they need a permit. To improve compliance and ensure that home occupations are operating “between the guardrails,” the Planning Commission and Selectboard are offering a 2-year amnesty period to receive a home occupation permit for just the \$15 cost of recording.

A home occupation zoning permit is a one-time permit that runs with the land. Home occupation permits are issued by the Zoning Administrator and the total one-time fee is \$15 (the cost of recording). For a home occupation application form click [forms](#).

A remote worker who is an employee of an off-site employer is not a home occupation. Only an occupation that is based at your home premises (where your home or accessory building address is your business address) needs a home occupation permit.

Finally, a word about **Home Businesses**. If you have employees who do not reside at your home but report to work at your premises, or you have exterior displays or exterior storage of materials on your premises, you are no longer a home occupation but a “home business.” A home business requires a \$200 application fee and a public hearing before the Development Review Board (a 5-member panel of Chester residents) before a permit can be issued. Contact the Zoning Administrator at zoning@chestervt.gov or at 802-875-2173 with questions.