

# Home Occupation Standards



Information About  
Operating a Business  
From Your Home in a  
Residential District

City of West Chicago



# Introduction



A “Home Occupation” means the use of a dwelling unit where goods are produced or traded, or services are rendered as an economic enterprise.

Home Occupations are permitted so long as they are an incidental or subordinate use to the residential use of a dwelling. Home Occupations shall operate on a small scale and do not have any detrimental effect on the residential environment.

The City Council has set criteria for Home Occupations to control their impact on residential neighborhoods. These criteria are set out below.

## Criteria

**1. Area of use.** Home occupations shall be entirely contained within the interior of a residence or located in garages or accessory structures on the site. No visible evidence of the business shall be apparent from the street nor surrounding area. Family day-care homes will be allowed to have an outside play area which shall be fenced. A home occupation shall use no more than twenty (20) percent of the total dwelling unit floor area. Those home occupations which require occasional meetings using more than twenty (20) percent of the floor space may be permitted, providing such meetings do not occur more frequently than once per month.

**2. Employees.** The home occupation shall be conducted by family members residing on the premises with no assistance from other individuals or groups.

**3. Sales, repairs and leasing.**

**Sales.** The commercial exchange of tangible goods or other items constituting a sale between the proprietor of a home occupation and members of the general public shall not be permitted on the premises of a home occupation. Members of the general public shall not include persons in the home by prior individualized invitation.

**Repairs.** The repair of items out of a home occupation may occur only when the delivery and pick-up of the item is conducted by the proprietor of the home occupation or by employees of the home occupation as defined in this section.

**Leasing.** The exchange of items in a lease agreement between the proprietor of the home occupation or an assistant and a customer shall not occur on the premises of a home occupation.



## FREQUENT VIOLATIONS

### Storage of Commercial Equipment

The storing of any commercial equipment such as snow plows, salt spreaders, lawn mowers, ladders, or any other equipment will result in a ticket being issued with out any prior notice.

### Vehicles

You are allowed to store only one commercial vehicle outdoors, so long as it does not exceed 8,000 lbs and has a B-truck or lower license plate. Additional vehicles or any that exceed the weight limits must be stored in an enclosed structure.

### Signs

Home occupation signs identifying only the name and occupation of the resident. Not more than one (1) such sign shall be displayed on any zoning lot. Such signs shall be non-illuminated, flush-mounted, and shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area.



## Criteria (cont.)

**4. Traffic and parking.** No parking in the public right-of-way shall occur as a result of this home occupation except for occasional meetings. If parking for a home occupation occurs in a manner of frequency causing disturbance to the normal traffic flow for the neighborhood, the occupation shall be considered a business best handled in a commercial district rather than as a home occupation.

**5. Changes to exterior.** The appearance of a dwelling as a residence shall not be altered to the extent that attention is drawn to the structure as a commercial or business operation. Alterations of building material, size or color; lighting fixtures or intensity; parking area; or any other exterior change should not cause the structure to lose its residential character nor should it detract from the residential character of the neighborhood.

**6. Nuisance controls.** A home occupation shall not create excessive noise, dust or dirt, heat, smoke, odors, vibration and glare or bright lighting which would be over and above that created by a single-residential dwelling. The production, dumping or storage of combustible or toxic substances shall not be permitted on site. Additionally, a home occupation shall not create interference or fluctuations of radio or television transmission.

**Visitation.** A home occupation may attract patrons, students or any business-related individuals only between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. At any time during the day or evening, the parking standards in this chapter shall apply to the activity generated by the home occupation, excluding family day-care homes; a home occupation shall also not generate more than six (6) arrivals and six (6) departures per day by vehicles. Family day-care operations shall not generate more than twelve (12) arrivals and twelve (12) departures per day by vehicles. These standards shall not be construed so as to prohibit occasional group gatherings, recitals or demonstrations. However, such gatherings shall not occur more frequently than once per month and must be held within the visitation hours specified in this chapter.



## NEED HELP?

If you do not understand any of the criteria listed on this handout, or you think your Home Occupancy will not be able to meet any of them, please contact the Deputy Director of Community Development, for a consultation.

## FINES AND TICKETS

A **\$50 ticket** will be issued without prior notice or warning if you are found to be in violation of the Home Occupation requirements set forth in the Zoning Code.



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