



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877

203-431-2766

HOME OCCUPATIONS

Home occupations are permitted in the Town of Ridgefield with certain restrictions, provided that the uses maintain the single-family character of the neighborhood. Home-based businesses are defined in the Zoning Regulations as follows:

“HOME-BASED BUSINESS” RELATED TERMS (from Sec. 2.2, “Definitions”)

Home-based business - The use of a portion of a dwelling or out-building for business purposes by the resident occupants when clearly incidental and secondary to the residential use of the dwelling (such as a home office or a home occupation).

(This definition includes, but is not limited to, the office, studio or workshop of an architect, artist, computer or Internet-based business, dentist, dressmaker, economist, engineer, insurance agent, lawyer, musician, photographer, physician, psychologist, real estate broker, serviceman or a dwelling used for preserving or cooking for compensation. Such uses as restaurants, tearooms, funeral homes, barbershops, beauty parlors, dancing schools, and animal hospital are not considered incidental and accessory to a residential use and shall not be deemed a home-based business).

Home office - The use of a dwelling for occasional business use (as part of employment typically occurring elsewhere) or a home-based business involving no non-residents employees and no regular visitors to the business.

Home occupation, minor - A home-based business involving one (1) non-resident employee or occasional visitors to the business.

Home occupation, major - A home-based business involving two (2) or more non-resident employees or involving regular visitors to the business.

Section 3.3 in the Zoning Regulations (“Accessory Uses”) describes three levels of home occupations permitted in Ridgefield, as follows:

PERMITTED WITHOUT A ZONING PERMIT (“as-of-right”): (Sec. 3.3.A.3)

[No employees are permitted at this level. The homeowner works alone.]

1. **Home-Based Business** - A home office within the same dwelling used by such person as his or her primary residence provided that:
 - a. the area devoted to such accessory use shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total square footage of the dwelling, exclusive of garage, attic, and basement area; and
 - b. the accessory use shall:
 - i. not change the exterior residential appearance or character of the building or be noticeable from the exterior of the building; and

- ii. not materially change the traffic characteristics of the neighborhood; and
- iii. not have any outside storage ; and
- iv. not involve the display of signs or products in, on, or about the premises except as permitted by these Regulations, and
- v. not involve retail sales at the premises.
- vi. no commercial vehicle storage except as permitted in 3.3.A.5.

PERMITTED WITH A ZONING PERMIT (from the Zoning Enforcement Officer):

(Sec. 3.3.B.1) *[One non-resident employee is permitted at this level.]*

1. **Home-Based Business** - A minor home occupation where such business is located within the same dwelling used by such person as his or her primary residence provided that:
 - a. the area devoted to such accessory use (including storage of any supplies or materials) shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total square footage of the dwelling (exclusive of garage, attic and basement); and
 - b. not more than one (1) nonresident person shall be employed on the premises; and
 - c. The accessory use shall:
 - i. be conducted entirely within the principal dwelling by the resident occupant; and
 - ii. clearly be incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling for living purposes; and
 - iii. not change the exterior residential appearance or character of the building or be noticeable from the exterior of the building; and
 - iv. not materially change the traffic characteristics of the neighborhood; and
 - v. not have any outside storage or display of merchandise, equipment, or machinery relative to the use; and
 - vi. not have any outside storage or parking of commercial vehicles, except in conformance with Section 3.3.A.5; and
 - vii. not include the keeping of stock in trade nor the sale or rental of any goods not produced within the premises; and
 - viii. not involve the display of signs or products in, on, or about the premises except for a sign as permitted by these Regulations; and
 - ix. not involve retail sales at the premises; and
 - d. parking areas for residents, employees or the general public shall not be located in an inappropriate location and any parking areas shall be screened, if necessary.

PERMITTED WITH A SPECIAL PERMIT (from the Planning & Zoning Commission):

(Sec. 3.3.D.2) *[There may be two or more employees, the space may exceed 25% of the home, there may be "stock in trade" kept at the home, etc., provided that the Commission issues a Special Permit.]*

Major Home Occupation - A home-based business where such business use does not comply with the requirements of Subsection 3.3.A.3 (home office) or Subsection 3.3.B.1 (minor home occupation).

Helpful links on the Town website (www.ridgefieldct.org):

Use the drop-down menus as follows:

"Departments – Planning and Zoning – Procedures"

Look for "Home Occupations," and "Special Permits" (if needed for Major Home Occupation).