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).