

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a home office and do I need a permit for its operation?

A home office is a home occupation, which is limited to an office within a residence, and employs only occupants of the residence in the office operation. A permit is not required to operate a home office as long as the following criteria is met:

- A home office is an accessory use of the residence, and can not occupy more than 20% or 20m² of home.
- All residents of the home may be employed at the home office, but it shall not employ people who do not live there.
- Clients and/or customers can not attend the residence.
- The home office shall be for office activities on the site, or administration of offsite work activities.
- If you rent your home, you will need permission from your landlord to apply for your permit.

Business use in residential areas is regulated to allow for limited commercial activity and to prevent nuisances to a neighbourhood.

For More Information

Town of Whitecourt Planning and Development Department

5004 52nd Avenue
P.O. Box 509
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N6
Phone: 780-778-2273
Fax: 780-778-2062

Hours of Operation:
Monday to Friday
8:30AM to 4:30PM
(Closed between 12:00 noon
and 12:30PM)

www.whitecourt.ca

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Home Occupations

Keeping you informed.



The logo for the Town of Whitecourt, featuring a stylized green and blue 'W' above the word 'Whitecourt' in a green serif font.

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July 2009

Home Occupations And Bylaw 1429

A home office is an accessory use of a residence, and does not occupy more than 20% or 20m² of the principal and/or accessory buildings.

A home occupation is any occupation, trade, profession, or craft carried on by an occupant of a residential neighbourhood as a secondary use of the residence. It is a discretionary use and the application must be approved by the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC).

A home occupation can not change the character of the home or show any outside evidence of a secondary use other than a small name plate (not exceeding 0.3m² in area). A home occupation can employ one paid assistant other than the occupant and/or the occupant's family.

Each business that has a home occupation located within a home must have an approved Development Permit. You may also have to get approval from other provincial agencies, such as Alberta Health, Alberta Labour and Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs. For more information, contact the Alberta Government at 310-000.

**When in doubt, the Planning and
Development Department
is here to help!**

Processing your Home Occupation Application

When applying for a Development Permit for a home occupation, you must briefly describe the type of business and goods or services that will be provided.

If you are not the owner of the residence, or if you live in a mobile home park or apartment, a letter of authorization from the property owner to use the property for business purposes must be submitted at the time of application.

You will be notified when your application will be presented to the MPC. You are encouraged to attend to answer any questions that may arise.

If an appeal is received during the 14 day posting period, or if the application is not approved by the MPC, the decision can be appealed to the Subdivision & Development Appeal Board. Appeals must be applied for, and fees paid, within the 14 day appeal period to be considered valid. The Development Officer will assist you through this process.

Upon approval of the Development Permit, the property will be posted with a Notice of Decision for 14 days and advertised in the paper and at the Town Office. The posting period will give anyone affected the chance to comment on the proposed home occupation. If no appeals are received, you will be able to operate the business subject to any conditions stipulated at the time of approval.

Considerations of Home Occupations

The following aspects will be considered when the MPC approves or makes additional requirements for the approval of a Home Occupation:

- traffic,
- hazardous materials,
- waste,
- advertising,
- employment,
- areas of use, and
- noise.

**Development Permits for
home occupations are not
transferable to other addresses.**

Typical Regulations for Home Based Business

The business can not change the character or outside appearance of the house or accessory buildings.

If there is storage of materials and/or equipment at the residence, the applicant must indicate the type of materials/equipment, where and how much is stored, and the length of time that they are stored.

If alterations have to be made to the home, a Building Permit may be required. For more information on applying for a Building Permit, check the brochure titled "Applying for Permits."